Engaging Students: Professional Development Resources for a Learning-Centered Teaching Program

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Asnuntuck Community College
Northamerican Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development
Spring 2008
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The Northamerican Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development (NCSPOD), an affiliate council of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), was founded in 1977. Members come from two, three and four year colleges plus universities, business, industry, consulting firms and government agencies from across the United States and Canada. NCSPOD’s mission is to increase institutional vitality by providing professional development opportunities for our members, enabling them to establish, enhance and revitalize staff, program and organizational development in their organizations. For more information about NCSPOD, please visit the website at www.ncspod.org

Bill Searle has worked in community colleges since 1971, as an administrator and faculty member. A full time faculty member since 1980, he is currently Professor of Management and Futures Studies at Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield, CT. His faculty development work spans over a quarter century. Bill was a founding member of the Connecticut Center for Teaching, which he ran for a four-year term, served in a number of other capacities, and was on the Center’s Steering Committee for over 20 years. He was also a founding member of the New England Faculty Development Consortium, served on that board for 7 years, co-edited the newsletter for two years, and ran their Spring Seminar for Faculty Developers for four years. Bill served on the AACC Commission on Academic, Student and Community Development for two years and was a member of the Commission on Diversity for a year. A regular contributor to NCSPOD’s newsletter, Bill also has authored and edited a number of other NCSPOD publications, as well as publications for the Center for Teaching, and articles in various periodicals. He has served NCSPOD as Northeastern Region Vice President, President, and Chair of the Editorial Board.
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Purpose of This Publication

Too many of our students are dropping out. More often than many people would like to admit, they drop out because of poor teaching based upon outdated, ineffective, inaccurate models of what a teacher should do. Our students’ lives are at stake, and it is time that everyone began understanding this. Some people have dubbed our colleges ‘Second-Chance Institutions.’ They are wrong. For too many of our students we are ‘Last-Chance Institutions.’ There is no net after us, no other place to go. When we fail them, we wound them deeply. Forever.

“Learning-Centered Teaching” is not an educational fad. It is an imperative. The time for scholarly debate, for discussions about what the research shows, for the endless rounds of discussions that occur in higher education has gone. We are failing far too many students with teaching-as-usual. Let’s gear up and get going. This publication is aimed at helping you do just that.

“What would you like as a resource on learning-centered teaching?” This was the question posed to a number of faculty developers. It will surprise no NCSPOD members that the results came back that people wanted a practical publication. “Ideas I can adapt to my situation.” “Programs that work elsewhere.” “No more theory!” “I need practical approaches I can share with faculty.” “Resources developed for community college faculty members.”

Thus, this publication is designed to provide developers with resources to use and adapt, ideas to consider and customize, and materials to discuss and determine how to use. You may wish to use this material only for yourself. Fine. You may wish to give the manual in its entirety to a faculty advisory committee to help generate ideas and discussion. Go ahead. You may wish to pull out ideas and adapt them to your local situation. You may decide to use portions exactly as presented. Go ahead. You may wish to put many things up on your teaching/learning website. Fine. Take what you need and discard the rest.

You probably will need to read through everything here to see what you wish to use. In order not to bore myself or you, different formats or approaches (for example, newsletters, or flyers, or workshops) also contain different content. You may find some ideas that you wish to use in a section involving an approach you do not believe will work on your campus. For example, possibly the “Question and Answer” concept or webcasting is not
something you can see working on your campus, but you do decide that the content in the samples included here that involve helping students do better on tests is useful. Fine, pull out the ideas and put them in a flyer. Even better, use engaged faculty members to take ideas presented here in one format and recast them into a format that works on your campus.

You may wish to start with one or two formats. Some workshops and luncheon discussions mixed with a newsletter or regular flyers are a typical way to begin. A local teaching/learning website is a wonderful way to provide on-demand information, archive ideas and techniques, and eventually provide a showcase for work your faculty has produced. After that, consider the ‘water technique’ of diffusion. Take the paths that are open, which means when you have faculty members willing to do monthly flyers, do that. If you can get some faculty interested in webcasting, move in that direction. When the college is ready to make its new faculty orientation program based upon a student-centered learning approach, move your resources into adding that to the puzzle.

Copying This Publication

Tear this book apart. It is not made to be downloaded, copied 200 times and distributed to faculty members. Download and print a few copies, to make it easier to see what is available and determine what fits your college’s culture. Work with faculty to pull out workshops that make sense for your college. Examine the newsletter models, the bookmarks, the flyers. Which ones might be adapted to your situation? Do so, and discard the rest – or put them in a corner of your website. This book is supposed to give you ideas, some resources to start with, and lots of material to adapt to your needs. It is not meant to be bound, distributed, and read from cover to cover.

A wag once dubbed NCSPOD the National Council for Stealing Programs Others Developed. Here is the perfect manual to disprove that description because you cannot steal anything! You are entirely free, and encouraged, to copy anything and everything in here. Modify items to fit your local needs, or have your faculty do so. It would be very nice if you would cite the source, however. If you develop an idea you think fellow faculty developers may find interesting, all we ask is that you share it at the annual conference, through the NCSPOD website, or through your regional Vice-President.
Thanks

A huge, huge thank you to all the students who have helped me learn how to focus on their needs over the years. I have been blessed by having extraordinary students who have taught me so much (and, they would say “we’re still working on you, Bill – cheer up, you’ll get it yet!”).

I also owe a great deal to my fellow faculty members at Asnuntuck. Extraordinary teachers who set the bar high help us all realize what we can do. An extra thanks to Edwina Trentham, Nick Lefakis and Mike Rood, who have served with me for over 20 years on our local Instructional Excellence Committee, demonstrating a dedication to the craft of teaching and expanding knowledge that is inspiring. Finally, a special thanks to my friend and colleague for nearly 35 years, Deb Matusko, the faculty secretary at my college, who always, always does things that make it easier for faculty to help students learn.

People I have met through NCSPOD have been among the high points of my professional life. Although it is unfair to single anyone out, I have to mention the tremendous influence people like Nancy Stetson, Ben Hayes, Kay Weiss, Helen Burnstad, and Charles Miller have had on me. Through the Connecticut Center for Teaching I have met many wonderful teachers and colleagues. Two, Christina Gotowka and Alice Burstein, deserve special note for all the feedback and help they have given me for years.

And, finally, to my President, Martha McLeod, who brought spirit and excitement back to our college, and our Chancellor, Marc Herzog, who for years volunteered to teach nights (imagine – a top official who teaches an introductory class at night!) down the hall from me, thank you for your support of the sabbatical that enabled me to write this! Lastly, deep thanks to my friend Sarah Garrett, now VP for Academic Affairs at Bristol Community College in Massachusetts, for showing how important heart and courage are. “Get their hearts first, their minds will follow!”

A Word About Wording

Some jargon is inevitable. Sorry. Hopefully, my friends at colleges with quarters (and my own experience when my college was the only one in Connecticut with three terms rather than two semesters) have helped me drop the word “semester” from this book. I hope. I do use the term
‘community college’ throughout, knowing full well that some of us are at technical colleges, institutes, colleges, centres, etc. It is convenience, not bias, as my own college was a community/technical college for years and I teach in a decidedly career-oriented field, business.

“Student-Centered Teaching” or “Learner Centered Teaching” or “Learning Colleges” or, -- there are many phrases and terms to describe the change from Instructor-Presenting-Content-And-Students-Receiving-It-With-Open-Mouths to something focusing intensely on what students are really learning. Choose the phrase you like. Each has advocates making powerful cases for why their phrase really, really is better than the others. Hooray. Pick one. I use ‘learning-centered teaching’ most often, but, frankly, jargon discussions bore me. Results count.

If there is something obtuse, please let me know. If you have questions about something in here, isn’t that a wonderful opportunity to call a colleague at another college?

Using This Publication

“What is the key to success in moving an institution’s culture toward student-centered teaching?”

△ Start
△ Involve senior faculty members who are widely respected teachers, or at least get mid-career faculty who are respected
△ Form a committee, task force, or maybe call it a posse to avoid the terms for groups that many faculty dislike intensely
△ Get senior faculty into a position to lead the effort
△ Somehow, get them the time to think, help adapt materials in this book, learn to run workshops, organize materials, etc.
△ Give them lots of verbal and concrete support
△ Start with ‘low-hanging fruit’ – those activities that you are quite sure will succeed
△ Be flexible. Use what works with the people you are working with, which may not be the perfect way to handle things
△ Trumpet success. Loudly and often. To everyone possible.

You may get the argument from an administrator that “we hate to take our best teachers out of direct contact with students.” This is, frankly, specious (it also indicates a view of teachers and teaching that you probably want to think about, but keep to yourself). You are asking for the best teachers at
your college to help other teachers become as good.

You may be asking for each faculty member to be reassigned from one course per semester. Examine the dynamics. A faculty member teaches between 20 and 50 students per course. That same faculty member, if he/she affects only one other teacher (and surely your goal is more than that), will affect that teacher’s 80 to 200 students per semester. Each semester. As long as that second teacher works for your college.

If you are still getting strong resistance to reassigning senior faculty to work on student-centered teaching projects, look at retention. Anyone with more than two months in a community college knows that the best teachers retain the most students. Many of those students, in tribute after tribute for the past 80 years, have identified their community college teacher as the person who kept them going, kept them in college. Colleges spend tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of dollars on various retention projects every semester. Some even work. All work far better if the teachers those students focus on student learning, engaging students deeply on personal and professional levels.

There are some specific suggestions for garnering support under the “Short Takes” section that follows.

**Learning-Centered Teaching**

All of us owe a huge debt to Maryellen Weimer for doing so much, for so long, to popularize the entire field of focusing on students. Weimer’s book, *Student-Centered Teaching*, is a classic. Her writing is accessible, focused, and oriented toward helping people who teach every day learn more about our craft. As the long-standing editor of that wonderful newsletter, *The Teaching Professor*, many (most certainly including me) would say she has influenced more college faculty members than anyone else in North America. We are better for it, and our students learn more because of her. If you have only one book on teaching and learning, get this book. Ditto one newsletter.

This book attempts to provide a variety of programming to help faculty members focus on student learning, not teaching. That process begins when they are hired and go through orientation. There is a sample orientation program included here.
Creating a durable learning-centered teaching culture at an institution requires much more than a wonderful orientation, however. It requires regular workshops on different subjects. It requires constant communication with and between faculty members on all aspects of learning and teaching. It requires rethinking what we ask faculty members to do on a daily basis, since so much of college involves ‘stuff’ not directly connected with student learning. It requires working with top administrators to ferret out ways that the college inadvertently makes it hard for faculty members to focus on students and easy for them to focus on something else. It means continuing to work with those same people to make it easier for faculty members to make student learning the center of their teaching, and hard for faculty members to do otherwise.

Finally, I believe it means using a wide variety of techniques to reach and engage our faculty members. If learning-centered teaching projects are to be the heart of a college’s instructional paradigm, then they must be more than a nice set of techniques that someone can dip into when a class gets bogged down. Barr and Tagg really were right in their article “From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education” which appeared in Change magazine in the November/December 1995 issue.

Incidentally, the charts comparing the “instruction paradigm” to the “learning paradigm” in that article are still worth reproducing.
### The Instruction Paradigm

- Provide/deliver instruction
- Transfer knowledge from faculty to students
- Offer courses and programs
- Improve the quality of instruction
- Achieve access for diverse students

### The Learning Paradigm

- Produce learning
- Elicit student discovery, involve in knowledge construction
- Create powerful learning environments
- Improve the quality of learning
- Achieve success for diverse students

### Mission and Purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Paradigm</th>
<th>Learning Paradigm</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>► Provide/deliver instruction</td>
<td>► Produce learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Transfer knowledge from faculty to students</td>
<td>► Elicit student discovery, involve in knowledge construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>► Create powerful learning environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Improve the quality of instruction</td>
<td>► Improve the quality of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Achieve access for diverse students</td>
<td>► Achieve success for diverse students</td>
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### Criteria for Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Paradigm</th>
<th>Learning Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>► Inputs, resources</td>
<td>► Learning and student-success outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Quality of entering students</td>
<td>► Quality of exiting students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Curriculum development, expansion</td>
<td>► Learning technologies development, expansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Quantity and quality of resources</td>
<td>► Quantity and quality of outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Enrollment, revenue growth</td>
<td>► Aggregate learning growth, efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Quality of faculty, instruction</td>
<td>► Quality of students, learning</td>
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### Teaching/Learning Structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Paradigm</th>
<th>Learning Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>► Atomistic; parts prior to whole</td>
<td>► Holistic; whole prior to parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Time held constant, learning varies</td>
<td>► Learning held constant, time varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► 50-minute lecture, 3-unit course</td>
<td>► Learning environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Classes start/end at same time</td>
<td>► Environment ready when student is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► One teacher, one classroom</td>
<td>► Whatever learning experience works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Independent disciplines, departments</td>
<td>► Cross discipline/department collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Covering material</td>
<td>► Specified learning results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► End-of-course assessment</td>
<td>► Pre/during/post assessments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Barr and Tagg: *Comparing Educational Paradigms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Instruction Paradigm</th>
<th>The Learning Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ Grading within classes by instructors</td>
<td>▶ External evaluations of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Private assessment</td>
<td>▶ Public assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Degree equals accumulated credit hours</td>
<td>▶ Degree equals demonstrated knowledge and skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning Theory**

| ▶ Knowledge exists “out there” | ▶ Knowledge exists in each person’s mind and is shaped by individual experience |
| ▶ Knowledge comes in “chunks” and bits” delivered by instructors | ▶ Knowledge is constructed, created, and “gotten” |
| ▶ Learning is cumulative and linear | ▶ Learning is a nesting and interacting of frameworks |
| ▶ Fits the storehouse of knowledge metaphor | ▶ Fits learning how to ride a bike metaphor |
| ▶ Learning is teacher centered and controlled | ▶ Learning is student centered and controlled |
| ▶ “Live” teacher, “live” students required | ▶ “Active” learner required, but not “live” teacher |
| ▶ The classroom and learning are competitive and individualistic | ▶ Learning environments and learning are cooperative, collaborative, and supportive |
| ▶ Talent and ability are rare | ▶ Talent and ability are abundant |

**Productivity/Funding**

| ▶ Definition of productivity: cost per hour of instruction per student | ▶ Definition of productivity: cost per unit of learning per student |
| ▶ Funding for hours of instruction | ▶ Funding for learning outcomes |

**Nature of Roles**

| ▶ Faculty are primarily lecturers | ▶ Faculty are primarily designers of learning methods and environments |
| ▶ Faculty and students act independently and in isolation | ▶ Faculty and students work in teams with each other and other staff |
### Barr and Tagg: *Comparing Educational Paradigms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Instruction Paradigm</th>
<th>The Learning Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>► Teachers classify and sort students</td>
<td>► Teachers develop every student’s competencies and talents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Staff serve/support faculty and the process of instruction</td>
<td>► All staff are educators who produce student learning and success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Any expert can teach</td>
<td>► Empowering learning is challenging and complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Line governance; independent actors</td>
<td>► Shared governance; teamwork</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Building a Learning-Centered Teaching Culture

Building a learning-centered teaching culture is not a solitary task. Far too many community college faculty developers are pushed into the position of being ‘the’ faculty development person. The field is too broad. We cannot know enough about each facet to provide the assistance we know our colleagues need. Active learning, problem-based learning, classroom assessment, learning outcomes, team learning, collaborative learning, cooperative learning, 12 different approaches to learning styles, experiential learning, multicultural learning. Do you need the list to continue? As soon as we feel we understand one facet, another door opens and a whole new area opens up. Eventually many of us give up because we know too much, and too little - too much because we can see all that we do not know, and too little to feel competent enough to assist our peers.

Stop. Building a learning-centered teaching culture is not a solitary task.

Our colleagues in many four-year institutions know this. They have teaching centers with staff and faculty members who specialize. Community colleges, where teaching is central to every college’s mission and nothing else is supposed to be close, need faculty development people. People. Plural. Not just one person in faculty development, or even four or five. A lot of people, and almost all need to be faculty members.

This book is based upon the following beliefs:

- ‘Get their hearts first, their minds will follow.’ Engage people’s emotions, get them excited and interested, and they will follow through. Activities presented in this book are aimed at getting at faculty members’ emotions.
- People change when they decide to change, not when we want them to.
- ‘Tipping points’ are crucial to success. A ‘tipping point’ is the point at which where enough has happened in support of a change in someone’s behavior that the behavior becomes ingrained, subconscious,
- Many ‘tipping points’ are serendipitous, they just occur,
- ‘Tipping points’ can be created if we are persistent enough,
- It is usually unclear what specific activities will trigger ‘tipping points’ but the more big and little things that happen in support of a change, the more likely a ‘tipping point’ will occur.
Therefore, our job as faculty developers is to create conditions that make it easy for ‘tipping points’ to occur.

Since we do not know what may start someone on the ‘road to a tipping point,’ we need to engage in diverse activities that we know tend to attract faculty interest. Workshops, especially when presented by a community college faculty member (although not necessarily from your own campus – trade presenters with sister schools), can be effective at generating initial curiosity. Some faculty members respond better to short flyers, or email tips, or to newsletters, or to a well-organized website where they can study some on their own.

What we do know is that a single activity is unlikely to create a ‘tipping point’, although it may. Therefore a project to help faculty members become student-centered needs to be multi-faceted. Use multiple channels of distribution, connected by a central theme.

For example, you may begin with a workshop. At the workshop, notice faculty members who are very engaged, especially if they are fairly influential on campus. Before the workshop ends, announce at least two follow-up activities. One follow-up should be something that brings people together, perhaps a luncheon discussion. Another follow-up might be a series of emails on the topic, or a newsletter, some bookmarks, or a flyer. (Models of all of these are included in this publication for you to adapt to your local situation.)

Ask for volunteers to help direct the next activities. Remember, make it easy for people to say ‘yes’ and hard to say ‘no’ – not the other way around. Figure out what the incentives are that will overcome the normal faculty thought about being on another committee versus all of the other activities that a busy and involved person will still have to do. Time is a valuable commodity to faculty members, so how can you get them time to be involved and to learn more? Need it be said that you should not initially make it a long-term committee?

Use your volunteers to build a core group of ‘peer advisors’ (discussed more later) that can help direct the entire effort. Why consider the term ‘peer advisors’? Some colleges have had more success both recruiting faculty members and in having others accept them with a term that does not imply that they are experts. ‘Peer advisors’, or some other term that does not put them in a position where they feel they must know everything (and, therefore, be open to criticism from other faculty members - not that faculty members trained in the Western culture of criticism thinking would ever criticize someone ...), extend and expand the reach of any faculty
development program. These people do not need to do this full time, especially at small colleges. They do need time. Your job is to get it for them, and then turn them loose to help create all sorts of learning tools for other faculty members, from email tips to website tutorials.

This book, then, attempts to provide a small taste of a variety of ways to reach faculty members with ideas. Create an email series of tips, or produce some bookmarks. Use topical flyers, run luncheon discussions, involve students, present mini-workshops, create a website. Using a multi-faceted approach will reach more faculty members.

Remember, you do not have to send the same teaching/learning email to everyone on campus. Consider targeting some to just the faculty members involved in a specific project, for example Kolb’s learning styles, or perhaps using student teams in class.
Those Little (and not so little) Actions and Activities that Build Success

What follows are some ideas to spread the reach of your initiative. These are not in order of importance, although getting unequivocal support from the Chief Academic Officer is crucial.

- Focus on ends, not means. Be flexible about the programs and projects you sponsor, but never about where you are going. Focus tightly on ends, not programs. A program may outlive its usefulness. Let it go.

- Measure ideas and suggestions (yours and others) against the standard of how far they move the institution toward learning-centered teaching. There is not another standard.

- Convince your Chief Academic Officer to include as part of their ‘email signature’ a very brief teaching/learning tip that you change bi-weekly. Remember, both real and symbolic activities are important – both send messages to people.

- Get your CAO to jointly (with you) send out a regular email (that you author) with a brief teaching/learning tip.

- Negotiate a discount with ‘The Teaching Professor’ for multiple copies – then negotiate for even more of a discount. Send dozens around.

- Negotiate a discount with ‘The National Teaching and Learning Forum’ – and then negotiate for a deeper discount.

- You get the idea; do the same thing with Atwood and other publishers. Find someone high enough up in Jossey-Bass to do the same thing.

- Convince your Learning Resource Center to create a ‘learning center’ with multiple copies of books on teaching and learning. Get extra copies of some books to give out to faculty members. Remember, many faculty members will feel more comfortable with a book on ‘How To Use Role Play in Class’, for example.

- Do not neglect physical space. Is your office tucked in a corner, or around in back? Perhaps it is a portion of the Learning Resource Center? It needs to be visible, open, inviting, and so obviously
important to the college’s top administration that it is one of the better ones on campus. People will notice if it moves to a better space!

- Doubling the budget for your center also works. Doubling it out of grant funds is nice, but if most of your budget is grant funds the message is that your function is not really central to the college (is the Business Office grant funded? The President’s Office?). Doubling it out of college funds and having the CAO quietly let it be known that this action was taken sends a much louder message.

- Get hold of part of the institution’s professional development funds so that you can bring faculty members to different conferences and workshops.

- How important is professional development in decisions about tenure, promotion, and the like? Hmm. This sends a very clear and powerful message.

- What priority are you on the Chief Academic Officer’s list? When you need an appointment, do you have to wait? People notice who gets to walk in, and how quickly. Plus it will make you feel important and wanted to know that you can get in to see her or him on virtually a moment’s notice because she/he values you so much! That attitude (not an attitude of altitude, an attitude of quiet competence and importance) will infuse you with positive energy.

- Are you involved in college classroom design and re-design? How about the academic area’s strategic plan? Why not?

- Does your CAO have a weekly meeting with her/his top supervisors? You need to be there regularly.

- Consider making a list of all the concrete and specific ways the CAO supports your efforts, and then a ‘wish list’ to discuss with him/her.

- Make sure there are specific, meaningful and public rewards associated with faculty members who actively participate in, and especially for those who lead, the ‘learning-centered teaching’ initiative on campus. ‘Specific’, ‘meaningful’, and ‘public’ are all critical words.

- Get some of the most respected faculty members on campus to serve on the advisory committee for your center. Do whatever you must to get their support and energy.
¾ Get your college to include a link on the college’s web site to a source
of active learning tips and techniques aimed at students.

¾ Once you have projects for faculty members moving, work with your
CAO to extend the project to other areas of the college. ‘It takes a
college to educate a student’ is not just a slogan.

¾ Focus on ends, not means. Ends. Be flexible about the programs and
projects you sponsor, but never about where you are going. Never
ever. Tie yourself to ends, not particular programs. A program may
outlive its usefulness. Let it go. Yes, this was first on the list also.

Searle – Engaging Students

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Two Programs That Energize Faculty

Send some faculty to a ‘Great Teachers Seminar’ and then run your own. These seminars last from three to five days, and the vast majority of participants both love the experience and feel energized to do more.

The seminars that are most well-known are:

- Hawai‘i International Great Teachers Seminar  
  http://www.greatteacher.hawaii.edu/Seminar.html

- Canadian National Great Teachers Seminar  
  http://www.facultydevelopment.macewan.ca/aboutSeminar.html

- California Great Teachers Seminar  
  http://www.ccleague.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3296

- New York Great Teachers Seminar  
  No current web address

- The Pacific Northwest Seminar  
  http://www.umpqua.edu/GTS/index.htm

NCSPOD has had a long and supportive relationship with the Great Teachers ‘movement’ and NCSPOD officers probably have information about other GT Seminars. There is also a website that links to some of the individual Great Teachers Seminars.  
  http://ngtm.net/

Now that NCSPOD’s own publication on Great Retreats is out of print (although you may still find some around), a good source of information is the excellent article Pam Bergeron and Mike McHargue wrote. Although dealing with the Great Teacher format revised for an entire college, it gives a good online introduction to the concept.

  http://ngtm.net/pdf/Adapting%20GT%20Model.pdf

Instructional Skills Workshops

An equally effective program for energizing people is an Instructional Skills Workshop. These workshops are generally 3 ½ days long. Limited to five participants, with two leaders, they are an intensive immersion in teaching and learning that also has decades of success. The single best source of information about them, and contacts who can provide information both about ISWs that may be scheduled near you and how to sponsor your own with trained facilitators is at

  http://www.iswnetwork.ca/
Online Resources to Make Available Through Your Website

Note: This listing includes only general sites, and of course, is current only through publication. Websites mentioned elsewhere in this document are generally not included here. While you can simply list these websites, it is most useful if faculty members at the college evaluate them and determine how to best use the sites. Many of these sites contain internal links to specific material that you may choose to clearly identify and link directly to yourself. For example, you may choose to list the Honolulu CC site in general, but you may also wish to link with specific resources on that site directly under specific topics, such as classroom assessment.

The grandmother of all sites is Honolulu Community College’s excellent site http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm

Indiana State University’s Center for Instruction and Technology “teaching tips” pages are clear, direct, and helpful. A major resource. http://www.indstate.edu/cirt/pd/tips/tips.html

The excellent site developed and maintained by two of the maven of cooperative education, Roger T. Johnson and David W. Johnson - tons of material http://www.co-operation.org/

Maricopa Community College system’s “learning exchange” of ideas on teaching, many of which are extremely useful, is at http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/mlx/about.php

The University of Oklahoma’s fine, graphic introduction to active learning (by Dee Fink) is a must – and easy to download and use in a variety of ways http://www.ou.edu/pii/tips/ideas/model.html

MERLOT is a site that all faculty members can book on their computer, as it is a marvelous resource for individual teachers, and a growing community of practice. This is a mega-site! http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm

Ted Pantz, Cape Cod Community College, has a helpful e-book on cooperative learning http://home.capecod.net/%7Etpanitz/ebook/contents.html
An excellent ‘one-stop shopping’ site with a lot of links to articles and ideas supporting all sorts of ways to engage students in learning at Illinois State University
http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/additional/active.php

The British Columbia Institute of Technology has a handy series of “How-To’s” as they call them, on a variety of teaching/learning topics. Brief, focused, clear and very well done, these are worth providing for your faculty.
http://www.bcit.ca/idc/resources.shtml

The IDEA paper series from Kansas State University present a great deal of information in a compact format, generally 2 to 6 pages.
http://www.idea.ksu.edu/resources/Papers.html

Sheridan College’s Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning has a very helpful page on cooperative/collaborative learning, with a number of links
http://www-acad.sheridanc.on.ca/scls/coop/cooplrn.htm

Abilene Christian University has an excellent and very well organized set of ideas and tips presented using Mel Silberman’s approach
http://www.acu.edu/cte/activelearning/

And, speaking of Silberman, here is his website (don’t buy, check out the ‘10 tips’ series)
http://www.activetraining.com/active_learning/free_tools.htm

One stop shopping for a relatively short article with many different teaching tips, categorized by type and with a ‘quick connect’ index
http://www.calstatela.edu/dept/chem/chem2/Active/

Bonwell and Eison’s article for the National Teaching and Learning Forum setting out the rationale for, and arguments supporting, active learning. One of the pieces that got active learning moving

Mentioning Bonwell, who has been a tremendous advocate for active learning (see the 1991 ERIC publication for citations and rationale if you need them), his site includes an extensive bibliography and research summaries
http://www.active-learning-site.com/

For best practices in technical education
http://clte.asu.edu/active/main.htm
Universal Design is a concept we all need to embrace. The single best source, which is an incredible resource for us all, is at the University of Washington – the DO-IT Center. Everything you could want and more, from online resources, to courses, to videos, to links, to self-study packages! http://www.washington.edu/doit/

A second excellent resource on Universal Design and teaching students with disabilities is located at the University of Connecticut. While not as comprehensive as the U Washington site, this also contains a good deal of useful information, and at this time, a downloadable resource guide for faculty. http://www.facultyware.uconn.edu/home.cfm

The International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education provides resources and contacts for those interested in cooperative education http://www.iasce.net/

As long as we are looking internationally, the International Consortium for Experiential Learning has some useful resources and contacts http://www.icel.org.uk/

The On Course site is selling their services, but the newsletter is useful, you can get faculty interested in publishing to it, and there are a great many ‘student success strategies’ online that have been submitted by faculty members http://www.oncourseworkshop.com/

Barbara Millis has an excellent introduction to cooperative learning, with brief clear descriptions of several learning activities that are good for faculty new to cooperative learning, as well as several learning activities for people who have some experience using CL http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/research/projects/hewlett/cooperative.php

From the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and apparently no longer available through them, but thankfully through Honolulu CC’s great site! A model for on-campus listings of activities, this one lists 101 things to do the first three weeks of class. Great on its own, and a model for on-campus faculty development activities to extend this one and develop ‘101 tips for …’ in a wide variety of areas http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachi p/101thing.htm
Team-Based learning is a particular style of collaborative learning that may fit the needs of some of your programs, particularly if you are using ‘learning communities’ or in academic programs where student teams are relatively permanent. A good introduction is at http://www.teambasedlearning.org/

If you need the famous ‘cone of learning’ (which, incidentally, has very little research to support but has a lot of face validity among college faculty) http://courses.science.fau.edu/~rjordan/active_learning.htm

If you are concerned that you need more resources, perhaps to satisfy those faculty members who want a clear orientation online, from a very practical perspective, check out what this site has by using the ‘search’ function. The material on collaborative learning is especially useful. http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/publications/index.php

An excellent source for brief descriptions of different theories and approaches to learning is Greg Kearsley’s Teaching Into Practice (TIP) site http://tip.psychology.org

And, if you need Barr and Tagg’s original article ‘From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education, go to Texas A & M at http://critical.tamucc.edu/~blalock/readings/tch2learn.htm

Even though many of the articles on this site at the University of North Carolina are old, they still have considerable worth. http://ctl.unc.edu/pub.html
Creating a Problem-Based Learning Project

So, you have a problem. Some faculty members have tried in-class active learning ideas, use classroom assessment techniques effectively to closely monitor both what students are learning and how students are reacting to their teaching, and have even incorporated learning preferences and learning styles into their teaching. They are excellent teachers. However, they are on a plateau and you know they might be getting bored.

Or, perhaps you have some faculty members, perhaps in the sciences or social sciences, who are resisting moving completely toward student-centered teaching. They use some active learning concepts, but basically as techniques to liven things up, not as the basis of their teaching philosophy.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) may be a direction for them. PBL uses relatively poorly defined problems to engage students. To determine possible solutions, students must use what they know, apply various critical thinking and creative thinking skills, learn significant group process skills, and be able to apply concepts and theories to real situations. Quite a tall order!

However, examine the outcomes associated with many degrees and there will be extensive overlap. Rather than what sometimes is a hit or miss approach to developing and assessing these key outcomes, how about integrating them so deeply in a course design that the course itself measures how well students are achieving some of these outcomes?

Additionally, for those instructors looking for a challenge as teachers, the skills required to effectively teach a PBL course are far more extensive than those required to run a traditional lecture-discussion course. Teaching students group effectiveness skills, group leadership skills, some critical thinking techniques, creative thinking techniques, and problem solving skills along with being a content provider and coach – and that is just the beginning of what an effective PBL teacher has in her/his repertoire.

So, where does one begin?

PBL requires a rethinking of the basic curriculum in a course or module, and a complete change in the instructor’s role. It is probably useful to caution faculty members who are contemplating using a PBL approach with first-year students (absent a commitment from an entire department or program to take this approach) that it will be very difficult for them. PBL requires a
complete revision of the role of ‘student’ and this can be very difficult if PBL is used in only one course. First attempts are better made at higher levels, and for community colleges, adult working students may find it easier to adapt to since some will be in jobs where these skills are required on a regular basis. Another useful way to ease a faculty member into PBL is to have the person design a segment or module of the course in PBL fashion to get experience, see student reactions, and develop approaches that fit their students in their curriculum.

What resources are available?

Fortunately, one of our sister colleges has a single best site for PBL. The Maricopa Community Colleges Center for Learning and Instruction has a ‘one-stop shopping’ site that you can use for all PBL needs. As of this writing, all resources are available via the web at http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/pbl/index.html

There are two other comprehensive resources to direct faculty members toward to learn how to use PBL. The first, maintained by Stamford University, was the original clearinghouse for PBL. There is an excellent introduction, definitions, a useful planning sheet, and other information on PBL implementation. As of this writing, all materials were available at http://www.samford.edu/ctls/problem_based_learning.html

McMaster University in Canada pioneered the use of PBL in medical education in the late 1960’s and has maintained a leading position in the field ever since. Their publication “The Tutor in Problem Based Learning: A Novice’s Guide” is an excellent resource. It is available at http://www-fhs.mcmaster.ca/facdev/tutorPBL.pdf

http://www-fhs.mcmaster.ca/facdev/links_pbl.html contains links to their resources and others throughout the world.

The University of Delaware hosts the Problem-Based Learning Clearinghouse, which you can join (as can your faculty). This is a superb resource for people new to the field, and experienced practitioners. The current web location is at https://chico.nss.udel.edu/Pbl

Creating a PBL program on campus is not as simple as encouraging faculty members to use active learning techniques in their classes. It requires solid support, a commitment to provide the resources and assistance faculty members will need to make changes in their role and to learn how to help students conceptualize a new ‘student role’. To be successful with Problem
Based Learning, faculty members need these skills, all of which can be taught in workshops, learned with a peer advisor for help, and practiced. Plan on working with your interested faculty members to conduct workshops and other activities to help them build these skills.

Skills faculty members need:
1. The ability to handle ambiguous problems
2. Experience using student groups in class, and especially in helping students run effective groups
3. Ability to act as a coach and facilitator for student groups
4. Thorough knowledge of resources in her/his field
5. Ability to teach various critical and creative thinking skills
6. Some knowledge of learning preferences or learning styles

One model for creating a PBL program on campus:
- Form a small steering committee of interested faculty members
- Determine incentives for faculty members to participate in designing PBL modules and get administrative approval
- Help the committee educate themselves through the online resources above
- Download the excellent PBL planning guide from Stamford
- Pair faculty up to serve as planning advisors to each other as they create PBL modules (suggest starting with in-course modules rather than complete course modules)
- Use an experienced PBL instructor to help faculty members develop the skills listed above, as necessary to their individual situation
- Download the excellent “tutor” and “student” guides from Maricopa CC to use as guides for faculty and students
- Consider getting the print resources available through McMaster as resources for faculty members and students
- Create a section on your teaching/learning website for PBL explorers to share ideas, post questions, and go to for resources and links to resources
- Consider joint orientation sessions for students in all courses using PBL techniques
- Form resource teams to provide sounding boards for faculty members as they implement PBL modules and encounter the challenges that accompany every new approach
- Provide some sort of reward for faculty members who implement PBL
- Publicize successes and use your faculty members to conduct workshops for others who are interested
- Get someone to continue to build the resources section of the PBL link on your website to make it easier and easier for your faculty to adopt PBL for modules and classes
So, You Can’t Get Acceptance: Start with ‘The Seven Principles’

If you cannot get general acceptance around building a learning-centered teaching/learning culture, start smaller – with something highly accepted. The “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” have been around for a long time, and provide a theoretical underpinning for a coordinated effort. What might a coordinated effort look like? Here are some ideas.

- Copy the Principles and give to everyone on campus
- Create a teaching tips booklet for each of the Principles
- Put the “Seven Principles” in student handbooks
- Ask faculty to share them with students in class
- Put up posters containing the principles
- Create a contest where students are asked which faculty member most exemplifies someone who uses a given Principle
- Get them in the catalog and on the college website
- Integrate them into questions that candidates for all positions (not just teaching) have to answer
- Include the Principles in the college’s outcomes assessment
- Provide monthly luncheon and dinner sessions featuring a specific Principle, with a focus on generating ideas for implementing it
- Get a group of faculty to modify the “7 Principles” to fit your college’s culture
- Ask each division, academic and non-academic, to include a discussion of one of the Principles and what can be done to make it happen more for students in every meeting
Start Early: Hire Student-Centered Faculty

Too often the view of faculty professional development starts with dealing with the people already on campus. The best practices of human development programs in business and industry start by recruiting and hiring the best people. This makes sense. Dealing with the best people makes all subsequent professional development that much easier. When we are trying to change an entire approach to a job, such as student-centered instruction rather than teaching-centered instruction, hiring decisions are even more crucial. Hiring people who are student-centered to begin with changes the entire tone and style of the professional development from a remedial approach to a future-oriented approach.

How can we do this? Engage faculty members in discussions about best practices in teaching and how to assess that in recruitment and hiring. Work with the administration to make hiring people with a student-centered approach to teaching the top priority. After all, community college faculty members tend to stay put once hired, so the hiring decision is something students will live with for 30+ years.

Incidentally, while these ideas are aimed at full-time faculty, shortened variations work for adjunct faculty as well. Ignoring the crucial hiring decisions involving the people who probably teach half the courses means that students will not receive a consistent educational approach. The best work with full-time faculty is negated if many of the courses taught by part-time faculty are taught from the ‘sage on the stage’ perspective.

Work with your faculty to

1. Develop a consensus about what effective teaching at your college involves. What does an effective teacher at XXX College do? Red Deer College in Canada did some excellent work here, and published the results widely for all constituents to view, putting them, for example, on bookmarks given to both students and faculty members.

2. Start a faculty-wide committee that prepares standard questions focusing on teaching and learning to ask all candidates each year. The best teachers in the college need to be on this committee.

3. Develop a standard orientation for all new hiring committees, reviewing what effective teaching at the college is, what the standard
questions are, what typical criterion are, and other key aspects of the hiring process related to determining how student-centered a candidate is.

4. Consider having finalists teach not a demonstration class to a hiring committee, but a real section of a real class, and have a set of questions that students discuss with some members of the hiring committee following the class, including at least one that involves whether they would take a class from this person or not.

5. Work with your administration to develop positive incentives for the best teachers on campus to want to be on hiring committees. It is an axiom in business that top people tend to hire top people, while second tier people tend to hire second and third tier people.

6. Get the faculty to design a few questions that candidates are asked to respond to in writing. Questions such as these both send a message about what the college considers to be important, and help orient candidates to the student-centered approach you are promoting.

   a. How do you know what your students are really learning on a weekly basis?

   b. Can you give some examples of what you have learned from a student or some students in the past year?

   c. Choose a key topic in one of your courses and explain exactly how students learn it. Please include how you assess whether different students understand the concept or not.

   d. How do you support the individual learning needs of diverse students?

   e. How do you know you are doing a good job teaching?

Of course, there will be other questions but if the only ones sent out ahead of time relate to student learning, it sends a powerful message, both internally to others at the college and to candidates.
New Faculty Orientation: Learning First

An effective new faculty orientation teaching/learning program is probably the most cost-effective program anyone can run. The average new full-time faculty member will spend his/her entire career at the college (among the most stable employees in all institutions anywhere are community college faculty). People already on an effective road to success are far more likely to be active leaders in all phases of institutional life.

**Learning First. Learning Second. Learning Third.**

The heart of any new faculty orientation program must be an approach to teaching and learning that puts **learning first, and all else no higher than fourth priority.** All else. It does not matter whether a new faculty member knows how to use the online instruction system, the automated grading system, how the Learning Resource Center works, the many programs available in the Academic Success Center, the online instructional resources available, all of the professional development programs being offered, or even how to use a computer if that faculty member does not believe at her/his core that learning comes first, and teaching must support learning. It may be hard, but convince people that the nuts and bolts can be done with an online handbook.

At the first meeting have your chief academic officer and President briefly welcome people to the college and emphasize how important it is for everyone to focus on what students are really learning, and how to improve their learning. Not teaching, learning. Help them illustrate that a college focused on student learning also must be a college whose faculty and staff are continuously learning.

In addition, have a highly respected faculty member BRIEFLY describe the difference between a student-centered teaching orientation and a traditional orientation on teaching.

What follows is one approach to introducing a learning-centered approach for your new faculty members. Discussing this, and determining what is most important at your college, is an excellent dual-purpose professional development activity for your faculty committee. First, they will be more likely to buy into the result and help to make it succeed. Second, discussing what is most important, and the order in which to present the material, is an excellent professional development activity itself. Talk about meta-teaching!
1. Start with an approach to intentional lesson planning. BOPPPPS is simple, adaptable, intuitive, and easily integrated with various learning style approaches and classroom assessment. In addition, both CATs and a learning style approach can be included in a BOPPPPS workshop without interfering in the basic message.

2. A brief classroom assessment workshop, including up to 5 different CATs that an introductory faculty member can use immediately, can be second. Include one or two that involve feedback on teaching and at least one or two that involve students responding to what they know. Teach easy to administer, easy to interpret, easy to respond to CATs.

3. Engaging students outside the classroom is so important to retention that it merits early discussion in this program. Impress upon participants that there is solid research indicating that students who see faculty members outside of class, talk about career and academic goals, discuss the course, get advice about transfer colleges, etc are more likely to also talk with the faculty member when they face problems (see CCSSE results, for example, because they are clear). Provide at least several easy ways that faculty members can use to get students to come in to visit with them early in the semester.

4. Session four can be a simple approach to learning preferences, such as VARK. The ideal system is intuitive to faculty, simple, and easy to implement in class. It also needs to be something that is simple to monitor (as in, ‘how many visuals do I want to include in this next class’ and ‘how many times did I have students actively doing something in class this week’).

5. The next session can be on outcomes and outcomes assessment. While it may seem as though this should be first, to someone not used to college instruction and jargon, starting with outcomes assessment requires a huge learning curve (including for people who have been teaching part-time for years, but have not been part of faculty discussions on outcomes assessment). After newer faculty members have planned individual classes, developed classroom assessment projects and used the results to modify their instruction, and done some thinking about the purposes of their teaching, outcomes and outcomes assessment makes far more sense. It also may be at the stage of ‘intuitive’ for some of them, meaning that you will not have to force-feed outcomes and assessment to them!

The more materials appropriate to immediate use that you can both physically hand out and have readily available on a teaching/learning
website, the better. If you decide to teach the VARK system, for example, have copies of the VARK test and handouts for students to hand to your participants.

That is it. Further sessions on teaching can profitably be concerned with discussions about implementing ideas covered in the first few sessions, difficulties with students, and the inevitable challenges of teaching full time in our colleges. These sessions are absolutely necessary, even if your college is one of those that assign trained mentors to all new faculty members.

In a second year, intentional course planning, perhaps using the ‘Significant Learning’ approach that Dee Fink developed, and/or the course planning material with assessment imbedded from Martha Stassen at UMass is very appropriate. By this time, newer faculty are ready for some deeper analysis of their students, what they are teaching, why, and how. It is time for movement toward meta-teaching, which is exactly what both Fink’s and Stassen’s approaches encourage.

The second year is also perfect for introducing newer faculty members to more sophisticated approaches to learning, perhaps using Kolb’s theory as the base. Kolb’s approach, and others similar to it, is neither as simple to understand, nor as easy to implement and monitor as VARK. It takes much more of a commitment to thinking about learning (precisely what we are trying to achieve, but perhaps not all at one time!). Kolb also easily fits with VARK, with no contradictions for individual faculty members to work out on their own.

Just prior to the second year is an excellent time to ask newer faculty members what they believe they need in order to be more helpful to students outside of class. Making it easy for them to want to talk to students is the key.

Achieving a student-centered teaching culture at an institution is neither simple, nor easy. Getting newer faculty members oriented in this direction is a major step. Neglecting the powerful impetus that a positive new faculty orientation program can have makes all other efforts that much harder.

The more faculty members think about learning, and how teaching can facilitate this, the more student-centered teaching becomes the culture of the institution.
# New Faculty Email/Webcast Tips

Help build a cohort of new faculty members through weekly contact. An email distribution list is probably best, as it more easily allows them to communicate with each other, but a webcast may be just the thing. Keep the ideas short. Here is a list to help generate what you think best for your new faculty. This is also a great way to involve seasoned faculty as writers or peers willing to discuss an idea further.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject of email or webcast</th>
<th>Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning students’ names</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students identify their objectives for the course</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students do readings for class</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting student feedback</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“One question I have after class today is ...”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing students for tests</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting students to see us outside of class</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping more students ask questions in class and online</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students analyze test results so they can improve</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using VARK in class planning</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting student feedback</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Confidence levels with course material”</td>
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</table>

## For those with more weeks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject of email or webcast</th>
<th>Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helping students connect key course topics</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students summarize effectively</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 exciting ways to end a course</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving students a personal goodbye</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What works – course notes for you</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Programs Aimed at Students

In creating a learning-centered culture, many institutions ignore the key people – students. “What? How can that be! The entire focus of learning-centered teaching is on students!!!!”

Really. Well, let us see. Where are students supposed to pick up the skills they will need to be partners with your faculty in this new culture? Examine your new student orientation program. Does it teach the skills that a student in a learning-centered institution needs to be an effective partner for the faculty? This is an excellent way to start making students partners.

An excellent question for a joint Student Services-Academic Area committee is ”what kinds of skills do students need to be effective partners”? Here are some ideas to get the group started. Students need to be able to

- Determine what experiences and knowledge they already have that might be relevant to a new course
- Write objectives for courses, and why this is important
- Provide helpful feedback to faculty members
- Be an effective partner and group member
- Explain their learning preferences and why they are important
- Explain their learning styles and some implications for their course work, homework, and study skills
- Understand the learning skills needed to be successful
- Articulate their current personal strengths and weaknesses
- Competently fill out common classroom feedback forms widely used at the college by having done them (with feedback) during orientation

In addition, it will be useful to consider ways of training ‘student learning mentors’ – students who can help other students learn and practice the skills above. Students can reach other students in ways that faculty and instructional staff cannot. In addition, they can target behaviors early in a term, and handle a large number of fellow students at a reasonable cost. Further, as ‘student learning mentors’ become more proficient they become an invaluable resource for faculty members. In particular classes, faculty members can use them to work with specific students that the faculty member has identified. The ‘student learning mentors’ may also be able to help faculty members understand student feedback on learning or teaching methods. Effective ‘student learning mentors’ with a year or two of experience at the institution can also provide a focus group giving useful feedback on the institution’s learning-centered teaching projects.
Student workers can be trained to provide a wide variety of specific assistance to faculty and instructional staff, from assisting with compilation of results of classroom assessment instruments to interviewing students about their learning experiences, to helping students understand the implications of their learning preferences and learning styles.

Student workers with experience and a good understanding of student skills necessary in a learning-centered teaching environment are also well placed to work with high school students (and to provide entry to their own personal favorite high school teachers). Some of the skills necessary can easily be learned by high school students (particularly if the high school faculty can also be brought on board).

Finally, experienced and knowledgeable students are also well placed to be able to work with instructional staff and faculty on print and non-print resources to provide students. Student learning guides for writing objectives, determining learning preferences or learning styles, group work skills practice, feedback practice, etc all can be made available online.

The more students know what is expected, the more they will be able to deliver. The more students expect certain types of courses, the more they will respond to faculty members who construct that type of course, and the easier it will be for those faculty members to manage such a course.

Classrooms are an oft-slighted component of an effective educational experience for students. Yet, this is where they spend the majority of their time at the college. Consider training a cadre of ‘Student Classroom Monitors’ who after some training can

- create a classroom database with relevant information about the condition of the room and its furnishings
- identify small deficiencies in classrooms
- identify large issues in classrooms
- talk with students in classes about how they are experiencing certain classrooms and identify suggestions that students have
- identify classroom technology issues
- maintain and update all information

The information becomes the basis for discussions within departments and divisions about priorities for improvements, and provides a student perspective on the place where they spend the most time. In addition, students can mobilize other students to push for change, help raise money, and lobby with legislative bodies for additional classroom improvements.
Classroom Assessment

Classroom assessment is an integral part of any learning-centered teaching approach. It is impossible to conceive of an effective program without faculty making extensive use of CATs. How can one possibly focus on student learning without regularly checking with students to see what they are learning? How can one possibly be student centered if students are never asked to tell their teachers how they are receiving different teaching techniques?

Classroom assessment is so vital that there is no section of this publication devoted to exclusively to classroom assessment. You will, however, find flyer models, email models, and other publication models with classroom assessment techniques infused. Also, all workshops show a marked influence from classroom assessment.

Why is there no section on classroom assessment? NCSPOD has a separate publication entirely devoted to the subject. Download it, and pull out the segments that fit your local situation best. Build a classroom assessment project on campus; infuse techniques in everything you do, create a culture that expects faculty members to ask students what they are learning and how they are responding to diverse teaching techniques.

One way to begin working on classroom assessment without forming a major project is to send out periodic missives to faculty members focusing on a particular classroom assessment technique, with a downloadable form attached. Here are some suggestions for the first term, and then to use for all first-time teachers.

- Background Knowledge Probe and Objective Checking prior to the beginning of classes
- One-Minute-Paper idea the third week of classes, with one example focusing on how students are responding to teaching and another focusing on what they are learning
- Key Principles Review midway through the term
- Confidence Levels with important course concepts 2/3rds through the term
- “Letter-to-New-Students” at end of the term
Webcasts/Video Series

While you can purchase excellent instructional DVDs on a wide variety of subjects, there is at least a quadruple-benefit to doing your own. First, they eliminate the ‘Not Invented Here’ syndrome. Second, they will fit your particular college situation perfectly. Third, the very act of scripting and delivering high-quality video is a superb professional development activity (to say nothing of the value for your mass communications students of doing a ‘real-life’ project that involves something they are connected to every day). Fourth, you have the rights to put them up on your website forever.

Why do any? Short, targeted videos of 5 to 15 minutes can demonstrate topics that are neither easily explained nor understood through any other medium. Also, unlike a workshop demonstration, faculty members can refer to them at any time. Finally, for those faculty members who are visual learners, targeted videos will enable them to learn in a preferred mode.

- Using Your Voice Effectively
- You Are A Physical Presence In The Classroom
- The First Five Minutes
- Nonverbal Behavior In The Classroom
- Techniques To Help Visual Learners
- Getting Students Engaged
- Getting Student Feedback On What They Are Learning
- Effective Use Of Media
- Helping Students Participate
- Acting Techniques And Teaching
- Creating An Open Classroom Climate
- Asking Questions That Get Students All Involved
- Asking Questions – Critical Thinking
- Handling Disruptive Students
  Note: This begs for a series targeting different student behaviors
- Setting Up Role Play Situations
- Coaching Students Through Role Play Situations
- Helping Students Process Learning In Role Play Situations
  Note: Exactly the same series can be done for using case studies, simulations or games

The wonderful thing about creating your own video library is that it need never go away. Also, you may be able to create a group that wish to watch a live webcast of topics as they are being completed, to then have a discussion or perhaps create a little workbook to accompany the topic.
What Works Well – For Me
Round Robin GIFTS session

‘GIFTS Sessions’ can be very effective, and familiar to anyone who has been to a NCSPOD conference. Great Ideas For Teaching Staff (or you choose an acronym!) are highly focused, fast-paced workshops. Since “GIFTS” is not an acronym widely known by faculty members, consider inviting people to sessions by asking them to tune into WWW-FM (an acronym contributed by a NCSPOD member who did not know the origin). This also helps recruit presenters by avoiding the “my idea is not all that original” syndrome.

GIFTS sessions exemplify the rule ‘rigid minimal structure’. Imagine a large room with perhaps 20 tables, surrounded by 6 – 10 chairs each. Each table has a number on it. You have a list of topics and presenters that coincides with the table numbers. Each presenter is sitting at her/his own table. A bell rings. You proceed to the table where the presenter is talking about something you want to learn more about. You sit down, and two minutes later another bell rings. The presenter gives those sitting at the table a handout and discusses his/her idea for 10 minutes. Another bell sounds, everyone gets up and you look at your list to see what topic you want to hear about next. This happens a number of times (usually four).

That’s it. The session is over.

Usually GIFTS sessions last four rounds of 10 minutes each because you are asking presenters to essentially repeat themselves over and over. This is harder than it seems! Also, particularly when done at a single college, it is better to leave everyone wishing they could have visited one more table than standing around wishing it was over. Four fits well with an hour, as it takes time to explain the ‘rules’, and between sessions to give people a few minutes to move to a new table.

Presenters are not being asked to stand in front of peers and talk for an hour. They are not being asked to do additional research. They are not being asked to present to large numbers of people. You simply ask them to pick an idea they can share with their colleagues in 10 minutes, and to prepare a brief handout, summarizing what they will cover and providing contact information for people to use after the GIFTS session ends.

The concept is simple.

1. Give participants a chance to get four good ideas on teaching/ learning in an hour, from a peer.
2. Give participants lots of choices of ideas they wish to listen to, so they are making choices.
3. Give presenters a chance to tell their colleagues about something that works for them, and that may work for others, without asking them to stand and deliver in front of an audience – they do it all sitting with only a few people at their table!

What you need for a GIFTS workshop:
- One large room
- A table for each presenter sprinkled throughout the room, with 6 – 10 chairs for participants
- Some way of identifying each table, from a balloon with a number or letter on it, to a sign – something that will stand out enough for participants to identify the table
- A bell, gong, or something to ‘call time’ with
- Someone with a microphone or huge voice to run the session
- A list for participants providing each presenter’s name and subject, along with her/his table number

What to determine ahead of time:
- How many people will attend. Until you get experience on your campus, having one table per every six attendees is safe.
- If there will be a theme for the session. Perhaps first you simple wish to say ‘student-centered teaching’ but for subsequent sessions, you may wish to emphasize topics, for example ‘getting feedback on teaching from students’, or ‘rubrics’.
- How you will recruit and orient presenters. Emphasizing that they will not have to stand in front of peers and talk encourages far more faculty members to participate. Consider having a meeting with presenters after they have been selected where you actually model a ten minute table presentation with a short handout will be useful prior to the first few GIFTS sessions you run. Emphasize to presenters that their choice of words for a topic is important because most people will have only that to choose from. Also re-emphasize that they have ten minutes only, no more time than that because participants will have to move to another table.
- Whether you will provide food before or after the event (afterward encourages people to stay and talk).
- Whether you will give presenters a little more internal publicity by putting their names and handouts up on an internal college website for faculty to visit (or use them in other ways, perhaps in an internal newsletter, or set of emails).
Running the actual GIFTS session is pretty simple. After welcoming people, remind them that the 10 minute sessions are not designed to demonstrate everything about an idea. The concept behind GIFTS sessions is to get a number of ideas, then let them percolate around in an individual’s mind to see how she/he might use them in their own courses, not to present finished topics.

After making sure that presenters are at their tables, explain the rules:

- Participants can choose to hear any presentations they wish to, in whatever order they wish – all the tables are numbered and everyone has a list of presenters and topics, with the associated table number
- Presenters have 10 minutes to get across their idea and answer any questions participants have
- At the end of 10 minutes a bell will sound and everyone must rise and go to another table
- Another bell will sound, and the next 10 minutes will be counted off
- Again a bell will sound, everyone will rise and proceed to another table
- Everyone should move each time, even if you wish to stay with one presenter to hear her/him again. The concept behind GIFTS is that you will get at least four ideas to work with. You can always follow up with a presenter later
- If there is a chair at a table, you can take it, but if all the chairs are taken you must move to another table. No standing around. If there is someone you cannot get to during the formal sessions, catch them right afterwards and get their contact information to send them an email or call afterward.

Adhere to the ‘10 minute rule’ rigidly. Slippage or allowing a presenter or two to ‘just take another minute or two’ quickly produces a mess. The idea is to present ideas, not to present finished and complete topics.

How often can you run a GIFTS session? How big is your faculty? Once word gets around about how quick they go, and how many ideas you can get, most colleges that run GIFTS sessions report that they are extremely popular with full- and part-time faculty members.

GIFTS sessions also showcase faculty projects without asking the faculty members involved to do a lot of extra work. Alternatively, if there are faculty members involved in projects that you wish to present, asking them to put together a short presentation is an excellent professional development experience for them. There is nothing like having to present a subject to help us focus on what more we have to learn!
Teaching Partners

One of the most effective ways to develop faculty members into “master teachers” is to get them deeply involved with a trusted colleague in dialog about teaching. There have been a variety of approaches to this taken by different colleges over the years. The most effective involve activities such as pairing faculty up for a year.

Generally, these programs involve teaching faculty members how to be constructively observant in each other’s classrooms, and encourage periodic visits (often biweekly in a specific class). Initial workshops often focus on classroom assessment.

“Constructively observant” is a term that can mean many things. First, it seems important to teach faculty members the basics of classroom assessment. Starting with simple ways to get feedback from students about what they are really learning, then progressing to how students are responding to various teaching methods is a common denominator. It also makes sense. Put two faculty members in a workshop where they share an experience learning about classroom assessment. Follow that with one of the faculty members teaching a real class and using a classroom assessment technique – in a class that the other is regularly visiting. The discussion possibilities are almost endless because of the shared data.

Classroom assessment provides a way to measure learning and the effect of teaching, but it does not address specific issues in teaching well. Many programs include a workshop on learning styles (Kolb’s Learning Styles and Fleming’s VARK system are included in this manual). Once more the shared workshop experience, followed by conscious attempts to use the material with a trusted colleague observing provides a rich trove of data to aid discussion.

Some such programs have also borrowed the “10 minute mini-lesson” with faculty serving as the students and then providing feedback to the faculty member doing the teaching from the Instructional Skills Workshop approach. This provides an added benefit, when coupled with guidelines about providing constructive feedback, in that it gives participants a shared experience observing teaching and listening to feedback from a variety of people.

Finally, many programs include a component that teaches the faculty how to observe students and different types of student behaviors. This includes actual observation before, during, and after class and ideas about how to
interview students singly and in small groups about the course. With this component added, faculty members have many tools to apply to each other’s teaching.

Finally, successful programs usually include a teacher-mentor who is available to the pairs to discuss particular issues, provide guidance when requested, and provide additional resources. This is particularly useful now that email and web sites allow us to both have much more communication than in the past and to share much more information.

The most successful programs that pair up faculty have one faculty member sitting in on a specific course the other teaches for an entire term or semester. The observing faculty member gets an in-depth and intimate look at the colleague’s teaching. Both get to discuss learning styles, learning outcomes, and methods of achieving the best information from students. While it may seem as though this might get boring after a few weeks, most faculty report that it is energizing.

“But, what of the second semester/term? Won’t most of the discussions occur during the first term/semester? By the end of that period, won’t the pairs have discussed just about everything that they can?”

Good questions.

One variation is to teach the pairs the VARK learning preference system the first semester or term, while using something more complicated such as the Kolb Learning Styles the second. This enables the pairs to integrate both into their teaching lexicon.

Another variation is to teach basic observational techniques the first semester/term, and to teach the pairs ways of interviewing students about the course to get richer data the second term/semester.

A third variation is to integrate work on learning outcomes in the second semester/term. This might be done in conjunction with intentional class planning, such as the BOPPPS system in this manual. Alternatively, it may be joined with intentional course planning, as outlined elsewhere in this manual. Both of these provide further rich lodes to mine about student learning and intentional teaching.

A tremendous benefit to running a program such as this is building up a community on campus of people with similar knowledge, and a common language. Participants in such a program also provide a rich source of mentors for new faculty, and can provide the core for faculty peer advisors
for many specific learning-improvement programs.

Incidentally, the most successful programs involve a stipend or reassign time for faculty members who participate. In at least a few areas, such a program has been supported by the faculty union or association through collective bargaining monies!

The following page has a sample format to use for a ‘teaching partners’ program. This type of document is best used for the teaching faculty member to fill out prior to class. After the instructor’s partner has observed the class, this sheet is given to that person who uses it to prepare comments.
Teaching Partners

Please fill this out prior to presenting your class. Do NOT give it to your partner until immediately after the class. Your answers will help her/him to think about what you were planning to do and connect it with what you actually did. **This is NOT an evaluative instrument.** It is also explicitly understood that good instructors do not prepare and then rigidly present exactly that lesson. Students respond differently, and this necessitates the teacher to deviate from the plan on occasion. That is a good thing!

**What is the student learning?** Be as clear and specific as possible. Being vague here will only create problems later. Remember, it is perfectly acceptable to have ‘interim learning’ on the path toward a more complete understanding of a topic. Specify it is an intermediate step.

**How is the student learning?** Are students supposed to learn this from homework, from doing problems, class activities, lecture, web-based tutorials?

**Under what conditions is the student learning?** What is necessary for the student to learn effectively? Is all that is necessary available to the student, and known by the student? Is there anything you, the instructor, has to do to help create conditions more conducive to the student learning?

**Is the student retaining and using the new learning?** What types of activities do you plan to see whether the student remembers and is able to use this new learning in the future? Note that this probably will require planning some class activities a few weeks ahead of time, and integrating that information in the classes so it can be checked.

**How is current learning helping the student learn in the future?** This is a difficult one, but necessary. How is both the content of what the student is learning and the manner in which she/he is learning it going to make it easier to learn more information like this in the future?

Interested in more information on how to use these questions to guide your course planning? Check out MaryEllen Weimer’s book, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice.*
Create a Wiki

Take advantage of interest in new technologies among some faculty to create a ‘wiki’ on teaching/learning topics. It is not as hard as you might advantage, depending upon the capabilities of your course management system (which may allow creating a wiki) and/or other software available.

The basic concept is simple. The initial hurdle is to select a subject that will engage some faculty members and then to get something written and available. Consider writing the initial piece yourself, as the best way to start is with an obviously imperfect document (but not a terrible one!). This may be difficult for faculty members to create since it may lead to criticism of their knowledge or intellectual abilities.

The second hardest hurdle to get over is that most faculty members have not either created or contributed to a wiki, so make certain that the instructions regarding how to contribute are clear, and clearly marked. Consider even sponsoring a luncheon with a sample wiki available and computers in the room, to allow faculty members to experiment with how to add or revise material.

The third hurdle is getting the word out that there is a wiki out there that needs input. Word-of-mouth helps, but it also helps to do some marketing!

Whoops, did someone forget to mention that it is important to have several faculty members monitoring the site regularly to determine if new material should be accepted or not? Again, you may find that there will be more enthusiasm for this role if you sponsor a luncheon with knowledgeable IT staff or faculty who already use a wiki, showing the enthusiastic faculty members who you wish to monitor the wiki how the monitoring role works.

Incidentally, one way to recruit faculty for the role of monitor especially is to get them interested in using a wiki in their classes.

That’s it. Once it gets going, and people are contributing, you are well on your way to a self-defining resource for your faculty. Your biggest issue after beginning with teaching/learning wikis may be to judge when to start a new topic, or how many to have bouncing at once.

How to select a topic? What is hot on your campus? Are some faculty members struggling with student classroom behavior? Are students with special needs an issue? Perhaps some of your faculty members want to do problem-based instruction?
Consider choosing a topic that allows both for a clear description, where different faculty members can also contribute ideas, lists, or links to expand the basic ‘encyclopedic description’ that can be too sterile.

Finally, once you have some excitement around the teaching/learning wiki you will certainly have some faculty members wanting to experiment with ways to use it in their classes. Some will even want small groups of students to be able to have separate wikis!
Focused Challenge Series

What is a ‘Focused Challenge Series’? Perhaps you have a friendly (hopefully) rivalry with a nearby college? Or, perhaps you do not, but it might be an idea to start a little friendly rivalry. Why? Another possible way to entice faculty members into discussions about teaching and learning is through a friendly ‘focused challenge’.

How do you start a ‘focused challenge’?

- Find a colleague at a college willing to engage in friendly rivalry
- Pick a specific, concrete topic
- Choose a topic that many faculty members can contribute to
- Choose a topic with good potential to generate ideas that can lead to changes in how a faculty member teaches
- Set a time frame of a week
- Follow with a lunch, brunch, or ‘afternoon tea’
- Get all ideas up on a website, and physically printed (preferably with names of faculty attached if that fits with your institution’s culture
- Use emails and flyers – multiple ways of reaching people. Make it easy for faculty members to participate
- Consider connecting the ‘challenge’ with departmental meetings and ask department/division chairs to devote a few minutes to generating ideas
- ‘Seed’ the first few by getting friendly faculty members on board with the idea to contribute early (and often!)
- If the topic merits, ‘seed’ the discussion with a few ideas to get the thinking going (see examples following this)
- Provide some way for people to see how many ideas are being generated, or the actual ideas as they are generated (to help overcome the ‘no one else is doing this, and I don’t want to seem interested’ syndrome)
- Consider linking the ideas with publication in a teaching/learning newsletter, or a conference, opening-of-the-year event, etc
- Leverage interest in a single topic or set of ideas into interest in creating a more consistent learning-centered approach, as with other ideas in this publication

What follows are some ideas of topics to start with.
Focused Challenge #1!

Remember how we like to ‘beat QVCC’? Well, there is a new competition! We need to see which institution’s faculty can generate the most ideas about how to engage students in their learning. This competition will focus on one idea at a time. The rules are simple:

We have one week
All ideas count (well, okay, they need to be at least remotely possible ones!) The ‘prize’ will be, … well, let us just say that it will be!!!
Our results will be shared with all faculty members at the institution If you want ‘credit’ for your idea, make sure to put your name on your submission or send it in via email
Send all ideas to the Teaching/Learning Center
There will be a lunch for everyone who sends in an idea

Challenge #1 is as follows:

We know that one of the single most effective ways to get students engaged in college is through contact with faculty members. Yet, getting students to talk to their teachers outside of class is difficult.

Hmmm. Okay, we need 290 techniques (we WANT to win!) for faculty members to use to get students to see them outside of class. Give us your best shot! Heck, if we have enough of them, not only will we BEAT QVCC, we will have an article for the newsletter!

The deadline is one week from today!
Focused Challenge #2!

Remember how we like to ‘beat QVCC’? Well, for the first challenge we didn’t do so well. They got more ideas than we did. Yes, we know – some of us wanted to let them win so they would feel better about themselves! Okay, we’ve done that. Now, let’s beat them!

The rules are simple:

We have one week
All ideas count (well, okay, they need to be at least remotely possible ones!)
The ‘prize’ will be, ... well, let us just say that it will be!!!
Our results will be shared with all faculty members at the institution
If you want ‘credit’ for your idea, make sure to put your name on your submission or send it in via email
Send all ideas to the Teaching/Learning Center
There will be a lunch for everyone who sends in an idea

Challenge #2 is:

All of us want to teach students higher order thinking skills. One of those skills is the ability to summarize material. When we have students do that periodically at the end of class is a useful way to teach the skill. Having students summarize with short paragraphs, or a focused list, is useful, but really fits best with certain learning styles. How about students with different learning styles? This challenge involves what other ways can we think of to get students to summarize – that do not involve writing a short paragraph or simply listing concepts? For example:

- Create an advertisement for class today
- Create a ‘30 second teaser’ as with a movie about to be released
- Design a picture
- Create a scandal that describes what we covered

The deadline is one week from today!
Question and Answer: The ‘Dear Abby’ Approach!

Consider the popularity of advice columns online and in print. Might a similar approach work at your college? Traditional paper-based? Email? Webcast at lunch on certain days? A show on the college radio station? This might be a chance to involve faculty members who ordinarily might not be involved.

This is probably best done via email; however, also consider making the questions and answers an integral part of your local teaching/learning website. And, yes, as with many such endeavors, you might have to ‘seed’ the first few questions and an occasional one after that to keep up the series. Several examples of a “question and answer” style series are included. Surely you and your faculty members can do better than this!

Or, perhaps your faculty includes at least two people willing to do a webcast where they act out the parts of two teaching mavens! That will enable you to reach some faculty members who might not respond to written emails. Webcasting provides a real benefit with questions that involve creating or using visuals. With some assistance, you can even demonstrate activities with a live class.

Brevity argues for a single ‘Abby.’ However, as ‘Car Talk’ with Click and Clack on Public Radio has shown, there is an audience for advice laced with humor.
Dear Victoria and Eduardo

This month we are introducing Victoria and Eduardo, our two teaching mavens. Why Victoria and Eduardo? In a blind test, they were the only two to (a) correctly define the word “maven,” and (2) recall the name of one student in the first class they ever taught. These two perceive themselves to be to teaching problems what Click and Clack (PBS) are to car problems.

As Victoria says, “Questions will be answered strictly in the order in which we receive them,” Eduardo quickly cuts in, “Unless of course we have no idea how to answer, in which case we will choose one that we do know how to answer. We’ll just pretend we never got those!”

First question: “I have several students that, no matter what I do, simply do not participate in class. Most of the class actively participates, but these students just sit there. This seems to happen each semester.”

Victoria: “Ah. A good question.”

Eduardo: “Are you going to answer it? No? Well, okay let me start. I would ask them to come in to meet with me outside of class. During the discussion, I would ask them outright what I could do to get them to participate more in class.”

Victoria: “Sure. Maybe they are really shy. What I’ve done sometimes is to put students in pairs or groups of three to do something, and then asked the groups to let the person who speaks least in class give their answer. This helps with some of them.”

Eduardo: “I made a big mistake once. I told a student he had to answer the question I asked in class. After a very awkward pause, a friend of his spoke up and gave the answer. After that class, the friend came up to me and told me that the original student stuttered and as very fearful of speaking in class. I’ve also had some students who were petrified of speaking in class, and nothing I could do was going to change that.”

Victoria: “In that case, perhaps they can contribute by doing diagrams, perhaps showing how key ideas in a chapter are linked together, and then let someone else explain it. Options are important.”

Send your teaching/learning questions to ……………
Dear Victoria and Eduardo

Victoria and Eduardo, our two by-default teaching mavens, flush with their success on the previous question.

Question: “Going back to the previous question, I’d like to ask some additional techniques to use for students who really do not like to speak up in class.”

Eduardo: “Sure, you’d like to ask, but do you think we have any more answers?”

Victoria: “At least one person didn’t like our previous ones.”

Eduardo: “Okay, fair enough. I would use my course website. Each week I would pose a question and ask students to contribute ideas. This gives shy people a chance to shine.”

Victoria: “How about creating a course wiki? Each week pose a topic and ask a different student each week, or maybe a small group, to start with the definition and description, and then have the rest of the class try to perfect it. Of course, with weak college software, you’d probably also need students to send you their revisions so you could track who did what.”

Eduardo: “Yeh. Another benefit of that is by the end of the semester, students have a good online resource for the weekly topic.”

Victoria: “Another thing a friend did was to call those students in and discuss their need to develop other skills. He has them do a diagram on some subject each week, on a topic he chooses. The really good ones go up on the web. All are shared with the class.”

Eduardo: “One of the people I asked told me that she had a couple of very shy students develop a little guide for other shy students of ways to contribute to class.”

Contribute the next question for Victoria and Eduardo by sending it to .....
Dear Victoria and Eduardo

Victoria and Eduardo, our teaching ‘mavens’, are waiting for your questions! Here is the next one.

Question: “How can I get students to do better on tests?”

Eduardo: “And, you want us to answer that? Who do you think we are?”

Victoria: “Do you think we’d be doing an ‘advice column’ here if we could answer that?”

Eduardo: “Okay, here goes. One of my friends allows people a second chance to take one test during the course. Only once. The second grade and first grade are averaged, so students can get a good benefit.”

Victoria: “Well, that is a lot of work for the instructor, but I bet it works. I’ve heard of instructors who allow students to analyze what they did wrong on a test, and explain their strategy for not making the same mistake(s) on the next one. They do a one-page paper that is worth 5 or 8 points added to their scores.”

Eduardo: “Yeh. That’s another good one. Someone mentioned to me that she had students who wanted to raise their grade say 5 points do a group paper on one of the answers, so they all had to learn more.”

Victoria: “Hey, that reminds me of another one I heard. This instructor gave students the option of doing an extra credit assignment.”

Eduardo: “Everyone knows that. I think it is extra work for instructors.”

Victoria: “Well, this person’s extra credit assignments were ones that saved the instructor time. The student could choose from projects such as finding good websites that relate to the course, doing a summary of several classes for people who missed class, creating material for the course website, etc.

Eduardo: “I like the idea of students doing things that save me time, when it helps them learn more.”

Victoria: “You know, if we were bright we would have started with that as the theme.”

Send your questions to .....
Tacos and Talk

It would be ironic to have a learning-centered teaching initiative without involving students. One way to involve students without threatening faculty members is to sponsor a series of luncheons for both faculty and students. Engaging students in discussions about effective learning provides a triple benefit. First, it demonstrates commitment to student involvement. Second, it personalizes the process for faculty members because students will be physically present. Third, it helps students practice thinking about their own learning.

Keys to success:
- Involve popular faculty members in planning the events and get them to commit to bring a student each
- Make certain that at least five students will attend
- Have good food - that both faculty and students will like
- Provide a comfortable, quiet location
- Pick positive topics
- Start the sessions off by briefly – briefly – noting that these are not gripe sessions, but rather time for people to talk about what works
- Pick positive topics as the focus of discussion
- Make a commitment to publish the highlights of the discussions
- Pick topics that both students and faculty members can discuss – this is not a one-way session with students talking to faculty members, both need to be engaged.

Possible topics:
- The best teacher I ever had ...
- The best classroom I was ever in ...
- One thing that a teacher did that really helped me learn ...
- The best teachers ...
- If I could give one piece of advice to new teachers, it would be ...
- If I could give one piece of advice to new students, it would be ...
- The top 10 ways that students can improve their grades are ...
- I am personally most energized in class when ...
- How can we get students more engaged in the college?
- How can we get students to use each other as study resources?
Spaces for Learning:
The Impact of Classroom Physical Environment on Student Learning

Notes:
1. Most organizational behavior specialists agree that the physical structure of a room has a major impact on behaviors. All too often, our colleges have not paid attention to this significant finding, to our detriment.
2. Learning-centered teaching in classrooms demands attention to the classroom physical environment so that it supports what an instructor is attempting to accomplish.
3. Most faculty members have not been trained in organizational behavior, nor have they considered, at a deep level, the effect of the physical classroom on student learning.
4. Making faculty members conscious of choices in classroom design is an important aspect of helping people become intentional teachers.
5. Helping faculty members become conscious of classroom physical environment is quite easy.
6. Undertake this program only if (a) there are many different types of classrooms on campus, or (b) you have a commitment from the administration to reconfigure 10% of the classrooms per year. Why? Because the more student-centered faculty members become the less likely they are to want to teach in either traditional student desk style classrooms or amphitheaters.
7. If you wish, it is easy to create a ‘self-study’ package to put up on a website by taking the questions in the workshop and expanding them slightly, with a brief introduction. Include the ‘classroom preferences’ sheet as the final page of the self-study package. This can be an excellent activity for a small faculty committee to undertake, perhaps if you wish to include some links to sites with further information on classroom environment. Converting the material yourself should take less than two hours.
8. The “Classroom Preferences” material right after the workshop can easily be used alone in a faculty meeting, or by department, to generate interest in classrooms and to gather data from an entire area about classroom needs.
Spaces for Learning Workshop

Notes:
- This is most effectively lead by a respected faculty member who has some knowledge of the reasons people may wish to have different classroom configurations
- While drawings of different types of classrooms can provide some information, far more is gathered if participants actually visit and sit in different classrooms as they are writing and talking classroom
- Limit attendance to no more than 20 people
- Provide blank writing paper, pens or pencils
- Consider getting pictures of conference rooms and training facilities of local employers known for their effective meetings/training
- Consider bringing in pictures of different kitchen configurations, especially those of people who live alone and large families
- Copy the 2 “Classroom Preferences” pages (one classroom per page, so space questions in the workshop below on each style classroom out so they can make notes) and classroom preferences sheets

Welcome

Do introductions and icebreaker as necessary. A useful icebreaker might be to give everyone two pieces of paper. On the first one they are to design the ideal kitchen for their residence. On the second, they are to design a faculty office that encourages students to stop and chat. Five minutes. Put them in groups of three. When in small groups ask participants to explain the design of their kitchen first, including the reasons why they chose this design. They can then do the same for faculty offices.

After asking people to wrap up their conversations, ask these questions

So, does physical space have any impact on what people do in that space?

If you want people to eat in the kitchen, what do you include?

If you want visitors to also sit and eat in the kitchen, how big is the table?

If you visit a family of 6 people and there are only 3 chairs at the kitchen table, what do you guess, especially if there is no dining room?

BRIEFLY discuss the effect of physical environment on social interaction
Objectives for this workshop:

- Help participants better understand the effect of classroom physical environment upon everything that happens in the classroom
- Enable participants to experience and discuss the effects of specific different classroom configurations
- Provide participants enough information on classroom configurations and effects on behavior so that each will be able to determine the best classroom configuration for each class that person teaches

Does anyone have anything else that he/she wishes to get out of today?

Discuss as necessary

If possible, take participants directly to each style classroom, have them sit in the chairs in groups of 2 – 3, and then answer the questions.

Discuss each room while sitting in that room

Spend extra time on the first room or two

Classrooms with traditional student desks:

Give participants time to absorb the room, make notes and discuss a bit, then ask

What type of teaching is encouraged?

What type of teaching is discouraged?

What type of student behaviors are encouraged?

What type of student behaviors are discouraged?
**Classrooms set up in an amphitheater style:**

Give time for them to absorb the room and make notes, then ask

*What type of teaching is encouraged?*

*What type of teaching is discouraged?*

*What type of student behaviors are encouraged?*

*What type of student behaviors are discouraged?*

**Classrooms set up with students sitting in a “U” formation behind small tables:**

Give them time to absorb the room, make notes and discuss with a partner, then ask

*What type of teaching is encouraged?*

*What type of teaching is discouraged?*

*What type of student behaviors are encouraged?*

*What type of student behaviors are discouraged?*

**Classrooms where students sit in groups of 4 – 6 around round tables spread throughout the room:**

Give them time to absorb the room, make their own notes, and then ask

*What type of teaching is encouraged?*

*What type of teaching is discouraged?*

*What type of student behaviors are encouraged?*

*What type of student behaviors are discouraged?*
Classrooms arranged with small tables, with 2 – 3 students sitting behind each table, eyes on the front of the class:

Give them time to absorb the room, think and make their own notes, then ask

*What type of teaching is encouraged?*

*What type of teaching is discouraged?*

*What type of student behaviors are encouraged?*

*What type of student behaviors are discouraged?*

So, are there some general points we can make?

Discuss as necessary

Almost irrespective of seating arrangements, if we give every student a computer, what do we tend to do?

What happens if we have only one computer for every three students?

Discuss briefly

Now, is there a difference if there is only one chalkboard, whiteboard, or projection screen at the front of the class or multiple flip charts spread around the room?

Discuss briefly

Spend a few minutes and see if you can think of any other physical aspects of a classroom that might impact upon student thinking and behavior, or instructor thinking and behavior?

Discuss
Summary:
Questions, comments or concerns about anything we have covered so far?

Handle them as they arise

Do you feel you have a better understanding of how classroom physical environment impacts students and teachers than you did before? What else would you like?

Discuss and answer questions as they arise

Hand out the ‘classroom preferences’ worksheet and invite everyone to fill out one for each class they teach.

Ask for volunteers to serve as co-facilitators of similar workshops, or mini-workshops for full- and part-time faculty on classroom configurations and teaching, or perhaps to redesign the ‘classroom preferences’ sheet, or to work with other faculty members on classrooms.

Ask the group to consider what they might do to help the college move more classrooms to a student-learning centered configuration

Discuss

Thank everyone for attending, and give them extra ‘classroom preferences’ sheets to use and possibly distribute to their friends
Classroom Preferences

Course title:

Note: Please write "1" next to items that you feel are absolutely required, and a "2" next to items that you prefer. Leave other items blank please.

Student seating for classroom:
Traditional single person desks:
Tables facing forward, 2 - 3 students per table:
Tables in a “U” shape:
Chairs only in “U” shape:
Chairs only in this configuration (specify configuration):
Trapezoidal/circular tables:
One computer per student:

Continual access to technology:
(This means you need this all the time, not for labs, or only some classes)
Document camera:
Overhead projector:
VCR/DVD:
Computer for instructor:
Computer for all students (laptop? desktop? surface mounted?):

One computer per student group (laptop? desktop? surface mounted?):

Internet by instructor only:
Internet for all students:
SmartBoard:
Camcorder or other camera device (specify):
Mobile technology (please specify):
Other (please specify):
**Writing Surface:**
Whiteboard required:  
Whiteboard preferred:  
Chalkboard preferred:  
Flip charts:  
Large student tablets:  
SmartBoard only:  

**Instructor space/furniture needs:**
Anything special you need in terms of tables, a desk, podium, storage, materials not covered above:  

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**Occasional/sometimes use:**
Computer lab:  
SmartBoard:  
Internet for instructor:  
Internet for students:  
Computer for instructor:  
Computers for individual students:  
Computers for student groups:  
Document camera:  
DVD/VCR:  
Camcorder or other camera device (specify):  

Mobile technology (please specify):  

Other (please specify):  

Other classroom needs for this course (be very specific):  

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Two Resources To Distribute

The two easiest resources for most of our faculty to relate to are The Teaching Professor and the National Teaching and Learning Forum. Both have excellent, short articles. Both feature very practical approaches to teaching. Both contain a wide variety of types of articles, so there is usually something in every issue that a person can gather new learning from. Both enable campus-wide distribution with substantial discounts for multiple copies.

Simply sending these two resources around to your faculty gets material to them that they might not ordinarily review or consider. However, faculty members are swamped with material and these may enter the RWIGAC pile (Read When I Get A Chance). Not good.

Fight against the RWIGAC pile by asking a senior faculty member to read each issue first and pose a few questions or comments about articles. Stick that material physically on hard copies distributed, or include it with an email if you can get electronic distribution rights. If done physically, leave space for others to comment, and encourage them to do so. Consider ‘seeding’ at least some by asking a member of your teaching/learning committee to read the issue next and include a couple of other comments, questions or concerns.

Several colleges have been successful including a luncheon discussion of each issue a week or two after it is distributed. Use the questions or comments that you solicited from your senior faculty in announcing the luncheon discussion.

If you have sufficient interest consider having interested faculty summarize articles that they particularly liked and make the information available (with proper attribution) on your teaching/learning website. Especially if all refer to the specific article or articles involved and you maintain complete inventories of all issues, these can be a very effective way to expand your on-campus tips and techniques. The very process of summarizing will be, for the faculty involved, a professional development exercise in itself.
Peer Advisors

It is impossible to create a learning-centered culture among the faculty by yourself. Effectively spreading the word, providing faculty members with assistance and support, answering the inevitable “Yes, but ...” questions and challenges, obtaining resources and fighting inertia and the bureaucracy requires a lot of people. Even the smallest colleges need a cadre of strong faculty members to help lead the effort.

At large colleges you may wish to have one overall group of faculty members who assist you in overseeing the entire learning-centered teaching project, and other groups that focus on specific aspects of teaching and learning, such as classroom assessment, problem-based learning, or collaborative learning. Smaller campuses may need only some focused groups of Peer Advisors.

How start? Seasoned senior faculty members who are already considered excellent teachers, are notoriously ‘committee-averse’! If you approach them to serve on another committee, well ...

Start where these people live – teaching. You know who you want to recruit. You need the people who do not approach teaching as their job, you need those people whose lives are teaching (and, frankly, if you cannot tell the difference, you are not the person to lead your college’s learning-centered teaching effort) who also have shown interest in influencing their colleagues. Not every person who is a teacher is interested in influencing her/his colleagues.

How get them? Get at least a couple of them to work with you to present one of the workshops in this publication and recruit, recruit, recruit. Go after the best. Get them into the workshop and at the end recruit the most enthusiastic into your first cadre of Peer Advisors. It matters less what specific aspect of teaching and learning you start with than that you find the most enthusiastic seasoned teachers.

The goal in creating Peer Advisors is to create a cadre of faculty to lead a specialized project on campus as workshop leaders, facilitators, coaches, and advocates for integrating this aspect of learning-centered teaching into the basic fabric of teaching on campus.

The Workshops section of this manual includes a sample ½ day and full day workshop to help build a cadre of Peer Advisors. The dual objectives for all activities for Peer Advisors are to strengthen a particular skill and build team
orientation and identification. In addition, as a model of a workshop specific to a subject that might be presented to Peer Advisors, there is a BOPPPS lesson planning workshop aimed at faculty who will teach others. There is also a model workshop for Peer Advisors relating to outcomes and assessment.

At least initially, Peer Advisors also need to be faced with situations where they can get success. These activities need not be massive undertakings. Little victories add up. Too often we forget how important it is for people to believe that they are making a difference, that they are succeeding. In addition, success also spreads to other efforts. Your Peer Advisors are leaders. The best leaders know that they need quick successes to influence others. People are more likely to join something they believe is working than something that appears to be floundering.

Perhaps some Peer Advisors can put out flyers, or emails, or a newsletter. Perhaps some can run workshops for other faculty, and particularly part-time faculty. Spreading the word can take many forms.

What follows are some additional considerations in building an effective Peer Advisors cadre at your institution.

- Garner the strong support from the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) before starting this activity.
- Include senior faculty generally agreed to be excellent teachers on a selection committee – make sure that selection is not by administrators, and divorce it as much as possible from campus politics. Work with them to create criteria that make it harder to be a Peer Advisor, rather than easy.
- Use those same senior faculty members to pick a title for these people that means something on your campus. ‘Peer Advisors’ may be a useful term, but it may not be.
- Select the first few Peer Advisors carefully. They will create the job, and help determine whether it is respected or not.
- Make certain that rewards for Peer Advisors are in place, that they are substantial, and that they are public.
- A key issue when faculty members work with colleagues on teaching and learning is confidentiality. Implement a clear policy, with very few exceptions (such as danger, or a student or faculty member’s mental or physical health), that peer advisors may not disclose the results of any work with a faculty member. Get this in writing from the CAO.
- Commit yourself to a wide variety of activities to help build your Peer Advisors into a team, conducted throughout the year. While the first
year is critical, continual activities as a team are necessary to maintain cohesion and a team orientation.

- Determine who will be the 'Advisor to the Peer Advisors’ – the person they go to for help and advice (who can be, but is not automatically, the faculty development person on campus). This cannot be an academic administrator because of the confidentiality issue. This person should have the same confidentiality requirements as the Peer Advisors.

- Create a distribution list on campus email, or a discussion group, that includes all the Peer Advisors and the Advisor to the Peer Advisors. If you expect the program to grow, consider an internal web site, with threaded discussion topics, archives, etc. Make sure this is a password protected site.

- Make certain, with no exceptions, that Peer Advisors get priority for any professional development activity, that they are the first people selected, and that they know it.

- The CAO needs to commit that Peer Advisors will be included on every faculty hiring committee. Every one. When possible they need to chair the hiring committee. Few things will cause other faculty members to notice more quickly than this activity.

- Peer Advisors also need to be seen by other faculty as a select group (not a group with attitude!), who also get priority treatment by the administration. Are faculty computers going to be replaced? You know who the CAO needs to identify as those among the first group. Are some faculty members going to get laptops as an experiment? Guess who needs to be included among the first to get them.

- The Peer Advisors are your team. Treat them well. Develop a list of little things that you can do to show your appreciation. Birthday cards (or maybe an informal birthday celebration with all Peer Advisors). Coffee and fruit. Books. Tickets to the World Series (okay, that was snuck in here to see if you are still reading).
Introduction to Kolb’s Learning Styles Theory Self-Study Package

This self-study package is included for two reasons. First, it is a very useful supplement to the workshop on Kolb’s Learning Styles Theory, and can become an integral component of a learning styles program on campus. Second, it is an example that your faculty can use to create self-study packages on all sorts of topics. While these will not appeal to all faculty members, certainly some prefer to learn this way. Also, including them on your website gives all faculty access to information for reference.

Ways to use this material

- Consider first whether your college can provide the full Kolb Learning Style Inventory available through Hay Resources (in print or online). If so, revise the first portion of the guide by removing the questions and scoring.
- Provide as a stand-alone guide for individual faculty members to learn about Kolb (although it is more effective to pair people up so that questions and responses can be discussed). Doing this requires someone who can answer questions as faculty members proceed through the guide.
- Use as the basis of an extensive workshop on Kolb
- Use as an online resource on a college web site for faculty members to use as a refresher
- Have faculty teams use this approach to create self-study materials for other aspects of your learning-centered teaching efforts to put up on your web site and make available in hard-copy form to your faculty (particularly part-time faculty)
- Have faculty well-versed in Kolb’s theory use this material, add their own, and adapt other sources to create student self-study guides
Introduction to Kolb’s Learning Styles Theory
Faculty Package

Notes:
For a reliable and valid Kolb Learning Style Inventory, as well as a variety of excellent resources, go to http://www.haygroup.com/tl/Questionnaires_Workbooks/Kolb_Learning_Style_Inventory.aspx

For more information, resources and extensive bibliographies, go to Kolb’s own site http://www.learningfromexperience.com
Before starting with Kolb’s approach to learning styles, please answer these questions.

1. Without being modest, please list the strengths you believe you have as a teacher and a learner.

2. Again, without modesty (not that this question is aimed at increasing our egos!), what are some weaker areas as a teacher and a learner.

3. Why are you interested in studying about learning styles?

Now, please think about a recent change in your teaching. How did you decide to make the change? Where did you get the idea for the change? What did you think about? Jot down a few thoughts please before completing the questionnaire that starts on the next page.

Thank you. Now please take the Learning Styles Inventory, score it, and fill in the charts. When you have filled in the charts, please come back here.
Taking in New Knowledge

When we are first learning something, many of us have preferences either toward learning through action and our feelings and emotions (Concrete Experience), or through such activities as reading, listening to an expert, or studying alone (Abstract Conceptualization). Some people are relatively balanced. That can be very positive, if the person uses the learning approach most appropriate to a given situation. That is a big ‘if’ of course.

Concrete Experience (CE)
If you have a strong orientation toward CE, then you probably have these strengths
- Learning with and from peers
- Learning from personal experiences
- Learning by being personally involved, with feelings and emotions
- Hands-on learning

If you have a weak orientation toward CE, then you probably struggle in learning situations where you must
- Work closely with others
- Learn from others, especially in situations where you must deal with emotions and feelings
- Determine what to learn based upon what is happening to you, rather than having an expert create theoretical situations for you to learn from
- Take action in order to learn

Abstract Conceptualization (AC)
If you have a strong orientation toward AC, then you probably have these strengths
- Learning from traditional textbooks and lectures
- Gaining an understanding of complex theories and principles
- Analytical thinking
- Using logical analysis

If you have a weak orientation toward AC, then you probably struggle in learning situations where you must
- Study complex material on your own
- Study the interrelationships between theories
- Analyze theories, or compare them
- Learn the fine points of complicated theories, principles, or methods of analysis
As you look at these descriptions, do you believe you have a preference for either? Try not to think of yourself in a course, but rather learning things on your own.

✓ Do you like to dive in to something?
✓ With a new computer do you set it up, look at the brief setup guide, and then turn it on and see how it works – or do you read through at least parts of the instruction manual, or help screens?
✓ Do you prefer to have someone who knows how to do something show you first how to do it right?
✓ Do you find discussions of theories and principles boring, wishing just to get going and get something done?
✓ Do you trust your own instincts and ‘gut feeling’s more than models, theories and research?
✓ How many basic theoretical journals in your field do you read?

Jot down a few ideas right here.
Making Sense of New Information

After we have taken in new information, we try to make sense of it either through actively doing something (Active Experimentation), or through thinking about it (Reflective Observation). As with concrete experience and abstract conceptualization, some people are relatively balanced between the two, and that can be good if that person applies the proper learning strategy to the particular situation she or he faces.

Active Experimentation (AE)
If you have a strong orientation toward AE, then you probably have these strengths
- Identifying practical applications of what you are learning
- Influencing others to work toward a defined outcome
- Taking action, doing things
- Using limited information to take action

If you have a weak orientation toward AE, you probably struggle in learning situations where you must
- Work closely with others
- Work quickly to take a practical approach
- Put theory into practice
- Make connections between a lot of information, or different ideas

Reflective Observation (RO)
If you have a strong orientation toward RO, then you probably have these strengths
- The ability to think about what you are learning and coming up with your own responses
- Dealing with ambiguous, or open-ended situations or problems
- Making connections between what you already know and new learning,
- Creative thinking

If you have a weak orientation toward RO, you probably struggle in learning situations where you must
- Think about what you are learning, and how you are learning it
- Connect ideas, principles, or information
- Examine a problem or issue from various perspectives
- Give your personal reactions and impressions about a theory, practice, or new idea
As before, when you look at these descriptions, do you believe you have a preference for either? Try not to think of yourself in a course, but rather learning things on your own. How do you like to make sense of new information?

A particularly significant aspect of Kolb’s theory is that he combines his different learning preferences into a cycle of learning. According to Kolb, the most effective learning includes activities from all four of the learning preferences listed previously. No matter where a person starts on the learning cycle, the most learning occurs when that person completes the learning cycle on the next page.
Learning Cycle

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Reflective Observation

Abstract Conceptualization

How a person likes to take in new information, new learning - some mixture of active and conceptual

How a person likes to make sense of new information - some mixture of active and reflective
Do your ‘scores’ make sense to you? Remember, this test measures only an instant in time, so your results may be skewed somewhat. What is your reaction?

**Determining Your Learning Style**

It is time to look again at your learning style. Please look briefly at the chart on the next page. Notice that both the vertical line and the horizontal line are marked off from ‘0’ to ‘100’. Now that you know what the terms ‘Concrete Experience’ and ‘Abstract Conceptualization’ both mean, where would you place yourself on that vertical line? If you believe that you have no ‘Concrete Experience’ desires to take in information, give yourself a zero. If you feel you are evenly balanced, give yourself a ‘50’. Go ahead, do that now, and then return here.

Repeat the process by thinking about your preference for either ‘Reflective Observation’ or ‘Active Experimentation’. If you feel that you strongly favor ‘RO’ then you may wish to give yourself an ‘80’ or a ‘90’ – perhaps even a ‘100’. Go ahead, place that dot now, and then return here.

Next, plot the intersection of the two dots. For example, someone who gets a 70 on the first scale (vertical line) and a 20 on the second scale (horizontal line) would draw a horizontal line to the left of the “70” and a vertical line down from the “20” to intersect. This indicates that the person is a Converger.
LEARNING STYLE GRID

Accommodator

Converger

Diverger

Assimilator

AE & RO

CE & AC
Examine your chart. You ended up with lines intersecting at some point. The example was of a Converger. What is your result? Are you a Diverger? An Accommodator? An Assimilator? Or perhaps you are a Converger?

What does this all mean? First, we will deal with a couple of questions that you may have (read the question heading each of the next two paragraphs, and if they do not apply to you, skip those two paragraphs!).

*What if I score right in the middle?* This means that you may not have a preferred learning style, but it still will be important for you to study the different ways of learning so you can consciously use the most effective learning strategy for a particular subject.

*What if I am close to one of the lines?* This probably means that you have some of the learning strengths and weaknesses of the style you do not plot into, but are close to. You will need to pay attention to information referring to that style as well.

Please go back to your original scores on the Kolb LSI. If you haven’t plotted your Learning Styles Chart based upon that test, please do so now.

Does your placement on the Kolb LSI chart agree with where you placed yourself just now, at least roughly? Take a few moments and jot down your thoughts about why the two agree, or do not agree. Then, we will proceed with more information about learning styles.
# LEARNING STYLE TYPES

Kolb combines the learning preferences into four distinct learning styles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodator</th>
<th>Diverger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doer</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reflector</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong on applications, involvement, working with people – weak on theory and theoretical principles</td>
<td>Strong on learning through experiences, and making sense of them – weak on practical applications and using new knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Converger</th>
<th>Assimilator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pragmatist</strong></td>
<td><strong>Theorist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong on practical applications of new learning, interested in what works – weak on ‘pure theory’ and open-ended issues or problems</td>
<td>Strong on theory, theoretical principles, ‘thinking’ – weak on applications, personal feelings and reactions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Styles
What follows are some characteristics of people in each learning style. Please note that these are **tendencies, not absolutes**. Also remember that a learning preference does not mean a learning strength!

**Divergers – Imaginative Learners**
Prefer to start with a personal experience, and then think about it
- Interested in the personal meaning of new learning
- Believe in their own experience over a theory/idea that does not seem to ‘fit’ with their experience
- Like to integrate ideas, connect new learning with what they know
- Tend to want shorter experiences, too much activity is confusing
- Often enjoy simulations, role plays, games that involve people
- Better at creative thinking than practical thinking
- Like to evaluate new knowledge before proceeding
- Good at generating ideas and in situations allowing ‘free thinking’
- May find it hard to concentrate on small details
- Interested in people, their perspectives and feelings
- Need to be personally involved and respond to teacher personalities
- Favorite question -- ‘What if we tried this?’

**Convergers – Pragmatic Learners**
Prefer to start with what an idea, principle or set of facts, and then try it out to see the effects
- Need to know practical implications of learning
- Like situations where there is a chance to practice applying a new idea/principle to a ‘real life’ situation
- Want instructors to emphasize just what they need to know
- Prefer learning material to be short and to the point
- Task oriented cooperative learning activities are beneficial
- Not comfortable with feelings and emotions, or discussions of such
- Prefer to be correct
- Tend to favor deductive reasoning
- Like to see a connection between what they are learning and their current situation (job, family life, experiences)
- Generally do not like free-wheeling class discussions
- Favorite question -- ‘How do I make this work for me?’
Accommodators – Active Learners
Prefer to start with what they see and feel, and then try it out to see if it works
- Prefer to deal with people rather than ideas, or even information
- Prefer shorter activities and quick feedback
- Take risks when they think something will work
- Perform well when asked to respond to an immediate situation
- Dislike listening to long lectures, or reading long explanations
- Want to get going, to do things – sometimes before understanding the full situation or theory/principle
- Prefer to try things out, see what happens, then fix what isn’t working
- Enjoy tackling problems
- Enjoy new situations, new ideas
- Prefer study guides that simply hit the high points
- Prefer to learn with others, and from others
- Dislike being asked to reflect upon or expand upon what they have been learning
- Favorite question – ‘When can we begin?’

Assimilators – Theoretical/Analytical Learners
Prefer to start with an idea, theory, or principle and then reflect upon it
- Analytic thinkers
- Prefer logical, rational theories and principles
- Dislike dealing with people and emotions, feelings
- Like to analyze reasons, theories, and principles
- Dislike making judgments subjectively
- Will follow study guides, tutorials closely
- Like to know what is right, correct
- Prefer study guides that include all the relevant information
- May ask for additional sources provided
- Understand and appreciate discussions of validity, making sure that sources are valid
- Enjoy a problem-solving process that is logical, and presented in step-by-step fashion
- Dislike activities where they have to be creative, or explore questions such as “what if…”
- Favorite question – ‘Why is this true?’
Now that you have gathered information about the different learning styles, where would you place yourself? How much of a Diverger are you? Or, perhaps you believe you are a strong Converger? Place yourself on the grid below please. If there is a significant difference between the questionnaire results and your self-perception, what do you wish to do about it?
Do you believe that the questionnaire results accurately describe you, or did you choose a different learning style to describe yourself? Please briefly explain your reaction.

Whether you agree with the results or not, how might you gather information to get a more complete picture of your actual learning style?

Do your responses to either of the questions above correlate at all with what your learning style questionnaire showed your preferred learning style to be, or if you disagreed, what you feel your learning style is? For example, if you disagreed with the questionnaire results, did you rely upon your feelings, or look for a more "objective measure" (and which learning styles would those two different responses reflect)? Under ‘reactions’ did you give feelings and emotions, or was it more of a theoretical response?

Are you interested in these questions? How does your interest in pursuing this have anything to do with your learning style?
Learning Style and Class Activities

How about working on some course activities that are aimed at people with different learning styles? Incidentally, what learning styles will this activity appeal to? Conversely, who is likely to want more information about the theory, its validity, and where it has been tested? While doing this, remember that a learning style preference does not equal a learning style strength! It merely indicates how someone prefers to learn. When using learning styles we can design activities that appeal to students with different learning styles, and teach them how to be effective with their preferences.

Divergers
Please identify seven kinds of in-class activities that you feel might appeal to typical Diverger students. Remember, not all Divergers will respond the same way to any learning exercise, so just because you aim an activity at students with this learning style, it does not follow that all will love it.

Do your responses raise any questions about Divergers? If so, list them so.
Accommodators

How about the types of in-class activities that will appeal to students who are Accommodators? Again, list seven.

Now do you have any questions about Accommodators?

What is your initial reaction to these two exercises?
Looking at the four learning styles, which one or ones do you feel fit best with the ‘traditional’ college class involving students reading a chapter in a textbook, followed by a class where the instructor lectures on the topic, with perhaps a short discussion at the end?

If you guessed the Assimilator style, with perhaps some Convergers also benefitting from traditional methods, you are grasping the importance of learning styles. Incidentally, what might some key things be that an instructor could say, or that could be included in a textbook, to interest many Convergers?

If you guessed including some practical information or some real world activities, then you are on a right track. Even better, if the class or textbook included opportunities for practice with new knowledge, that would also attract many Convergers.

The difficulty is that traditional higher education definitely emphasizes the type of learning preferred by Assimilators. Convergers can be interested. Divergers fit a little. Accommodators do not fit with traditional methods of college instruction, except in such things as sports, music, theater, or arts. Can you imagine a basketball coach giving an hour lecture on the theory behind shooting off a screen, or an art instructor giving an hour lecture on how to hold a paint brush to achieve a certain result? Explanations are short, and then students try things out and receive feedback as they are doing things, adjusting their work as they are learning more.
Please list three applications of this information for your own teaching.

1.

2.

3.

How can you develop applications exercises to appeal to those students who like this kind of activity, while stretching those who do not care about practical applications of what they are learning?
Learning Styles and Tests
Most of us have taken many tests on the college level. We also give them. Does college testing take into account diverse student learning styles? What do you think? Examine the information about learning styles and identify any that you believe fit well with typical ‘objective’ tests (multiple choice, true/false, matching terms).

If you listed Assimilators and some Convergers again, you understand both what those two terms mean, and why learning styles are significant.

If we examine essay examinations, the answers are not so clear-cut. Examine the information on learning styles and then try to identify the type of essay question that may appeal to each style.

What type of questions on an essay exam will particularly interest Convergers?

If you identified questions emphasizing practical applications of learning, especially if the question includes ‘real-world’ information, you are on a right track. How about the other styles? What type of essay questions might they prefer?

Assimilators?

Divergers?

Accommodators?

Assimilators do best on theory, recall, and logical analysis style questions (“Explain in detail what many Southerners said were the causes of the Civil War”). Divergers may respond well to questions that require them to
examine their own learning, and use the new knowledge to come up with innovative approaches to problems ("Looking at the major causes of the Civil War, if you were President Lincoln’s chief advisor, what ideas might you have given him to help avert the conflict?"). Accommodators? Well, examinations in general do not fit well with preferred learning styles of Accommodators, so most of them will probably say the preferred essay exam is none. However, short answer, emphasizing application, can fit their needs, especially if the instructor allows students to use notes for the exam “Pick three causes of the Civil War and briefly identify a lesson we can apply to the United States today.”).

Of course your responses are probably very different from those listed above. However, do you see similarities? What are your reactions to learning styles and tests? Questions that come to mind based upon what you have just done?

Incidentally, what learning styles are the ‘reaction’ sections of this handbook aimed at? How about the ‘question’ sections?
Learning Styles and Questions

Once we begin integrating knowledge about diverse learning styles into our teaching, we realize that it impacts upon everything that we do. For example, what about the shy student who never responds to a question in class? Are the types of questions we ask related to our own preferred learning style? Probably. Perhaps asking questions from different perspectives will involve more students.

For example, what kind of question might you ask a quiet Diverger?

One approach to asking a question Divergers may be able to respond to is to ask for additional ways of approaching a problem, or help in generating alternatives, or something asking for reflection upon a recent experience.

How about a quiet Converger?

Quiet Convergers may respond well to questions asking for practical applications, how to use a theory or principle in ‘real life’, or for ways to simplify a theory or principle.

Accommodators may pose an interesting dilemma. Because they are not concerned as much with details, or knowing all facets of a theory, some Accommodators may be the students who respond the quickest in your class. However, they will often offer incomplete, or somewhat inaccurate, answers since they skim over information that you may consider crucial. Does this make sense to you? If not, look back over the information about Accommodators (and ask someone you consider knowledgeable).

How about what kind of question to ask a quiet Accommodator, or to give a participatory Accommodator the style of question where he/she can do well with?

If you thought of questions about feelings, immediate personal reactions, quick applications -- short and concrete questions, then you have a good handle on how to involve Accommodators. Now, why have there not been
questions about what you should ask Assimilators?

If you guessed that a reason is that the questions that many of us ask already appeal to Assimilators, then you are on a right track. In a typical college classroom, there are more instructor questions related to the kinds of learning that Assimilators prefer (but, do remember that just because a student prefers an Assimilator learning style, it does not follow that the student is good at it!).

**Learning Styles and Assignments**

We give assignments. That is what we do. How do you give class assignments? “Please give me an analysis of ...” Hmmm. What learning style might fit best with that?

Are you inadvertently giving assignments that make some students more comfortable than others? Do your assignments tend to favor one learning style, or perhaps two?

List some ideas about the types of assignments that will appeal to Accommodators and Divergers, and how to phrase them.
Learning Style Reflection

My Learning Style: ________________

This means as a teacher I probably prefer these kinds of activities

I probably avoid these kinds of activities (look at the learning style opposite yours for the kinds of activities you are unlikely to normally prefer doing in a course)

When I am learning I probably prefer

When I think of my classes, my favorite question to ask is

In what ways can I help students identify what type of learning is required in a given situation? How can I help them identify what they need to do to learn that way?
Applications

Time for the favorite part for Accommodators and Convergers (assuming that those of you who are Accommodators have gotten this far!). Practical applications.

Please identify three applications for your own teaching of this information on learning styles.

1.

2.

3

Who will you use as a sounding board, or perhaps as a peer advisor, as you experiment?

What resources will you need?

When and how will you report on your experiment?
Universal Design

It is impossible to talk about learning-centered teaching without also discussing students with different needs. While community colleges have always been among the most accessible of higher education institutions, clearly much more must be done. We have long made significant accommodations for students with special needs, and that should continue.

However, the more proactive approach encompassed by the term ‘Universal Design’ clearly is the future. Basically, this involves helping faculty members create courses that are comfortable for people with a wide range of abilities. The term, as defined by the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University, means “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.”

What does this mean? Well, for instructional practices it means such things as simple good instructional practices such as facing the class and enunciating clearly when speaking (so hearing impaired students with lip reading ability can do so) or providing clear assignments that are also available via the web in case a student needs someone else to read it for them – and much more, of course. It also can mean more complex changes involving multiple ways to do an assignment.

Viewing a course as a system, with the need for varied ways to gather information, participate, and be evaluated, is basic to the Universal Design concept. A comprehensive approach includes programming that covers everything from creating an inclusive climate in the classroom, through providing multiple ways for students to participate, to making sure that classrooms and laboratories are accessible, to providing flexible ways for students to be graded.

Sound like a lot? Well, first you can practice with your own training programs and workshops. Model good practices. Second, there is a single best source of information at the University of Washington – the Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology Center. Use the acronym, DO-IT and you will find tremendous resources for yourself and your faculty.
Evaluating Your Efforts

There are great books and a myriad of articles written about evaluation. If you have a preferred way, then by all means use it.

If not, try this one. You can learn it in four minutes, implement in another ten. Furthermore, you control what levels you choose to measure, and how. You might even consider other ways of using this model throughout the college. Incidentally, colleges that have implemented significant outcomes assessment programs will already have some personnel with skills in all four of these areas.

1. **Reaction.** Get immediate feedback from the participants about their feelings and reactions to the learning. Everyone knows this type of feedback, because it is the most commonly used model. This is actually more useful than it seems because people’s emotional reactions are important to engage when trying to get them to change behaviors. However, there are significant disadvantages of using only this type of feedback to indicate success/failure of a workshop, course or program. Initial reactive feedback is not a reliable predictor of whether people will actually implement a change or not.

2. **Learning.** Do a post-test that identifies what the participants actually learned. Can they actually do what is asked? Again, this is significant because people who have not learned cannot be expected to change their behaviors. Again, however, this does not measure actual changes in behavior. It only measures whether participants have the new knowledge deemed important to a change effort. Knowing something new is necessary to changing behavior, but not sufficient, as all college faculty members know.

3. **Behaviors.** Do people actually use their new learning when they get back on the job? How are participants actually using what they have learned? This type of evaluation is much more difficult to design. First, it requires being specific about the types of behaviors that are desired. Second, it requires a significant effort to actually document behaviors, and identify those that have changed. A great many evaluative systems stop at this level because it is so difficult to measure. However, this is not the final step. Only results count in the end, not anything else. This is not an indictment of what are often referred to as ‘soft skills’. Documenting results of change efforts that
concentrate on ‘soft skills’ is perfectly valid.

4. **Results.** Okay, so participants have reacted favorably, have learned what to do, and have implemented the results – is there any effect? In our case, are students learning more? Are more students staying in class? We certainly are not training faculty members as an end in itself. The result relates to student learning. A results-oriented evaluation system must include a pre-test of some sort to establish a baseline to measure against, and then a post-test of some sort to measure changes in learning. Please note that the terms ‘pre-test’ and ‘post-test’ do not require actual tests, merely some activity to provide a baseline.

That is it. You can design evaluation instruments that measure results for each stage. Note that the stages are almost – almost – independent of each other. The fact that people responded extremely favorably to a program on Level 1 has little to do with whether they learned anything on Level 2, for example.

Here is a secret. This model is used by trainers in business and industry (since 1959 in fact). The Kirkpatrick Four-Level Evaluation Model was developed by Donald Kirkpatrick at the University of Wisconsin. Kirkpatrick postulated four distinct ‘levels’ with which to evaluate the results of any training program. All four are important. All represent significant steps in a change effort. The key to using this model is that you can create any kind of evaluative device to measure success at any level (something the critics of this model all miss!).
Workshops Section

“Get their hearts, their minds will follow”

At least as much as other people, community college faculty members respond to personal experiences. Workshops with hot-personality leaders engage faculty and get them hooked. Get their hearts.

Marketing a workshop – yes, marketing – is extremely important. Use email teasers, short flyers, announcements in departmental and divisional meetings. Pictures. Focus on the benefits to attendees and their students. Whenever possible, get faculty members themselves involved in recruiting attendees. People who are energized about attending, especially if they have some sense of what may be covered, are already on their way to changing.

However, it is rare that a workshop itself will significantly change anyone’s behavior. Follow-up is critical. Targeted emails, flyers, short (SHORT!) materials all contribute to the flow of information necessary to help faculty make changes. However, for most faculty contact is necessary. During the workshop schedule a follow-up luncheon or two, and plan for more activities throughout the academic year. Work hard to create a cohort who will support and encourage each other (and, surely, praise yourself if you can get as many as the Roman army had in their cohorts – 300 to 600!). Make sure that all workshop leaders know a key task is identifying people to help lead the effort to spread the word, and get those names immediately after the workshop so you can target special efforts to get them involved.

An added benefit to having a cohort coordinating the college’s effort to promote learning styles, or classroom assessment, or collaborative learning is that you need only provide logistical support to their committee. This allows you to move on to another key subject.

Concerned about the mechanics of administering effective workshops? Review the checklist at the end of this section.

While there are several different styles to the workshops that follow, so you can choose ones that fit your own preferences and college’s culture, all deeply and significantly involve participants. Faculty members can be very cynical about workshop presenters who lecture about how to teach in a learner-centered manner!
Personal Learning Application

One way to help people integrate knowledge using an experiential learning cycle is by having them write about their experiences. Here is one format that can reinforce the experiential learning cycle. It involves writing about a given experience in four parts. This can be adapted and used at the end of any workshop, or as a follow-up to a workshop, to help faculty more fully integrate new knowledge/experience/attitudes into their teaching.

1. Select an experience and describe what went on. This has both an objective and a subjective component. Explain what happened, AND explain how you felt and what you were thinking about as you went through this experience. What did you do, hear, think, feel, see - what were others doing/feeling/saying? Please write only what was happening during the experience, not what you or others reflected upon afterward.

2. Reflect back upon your experience, and also view it from different perspectives. Mull over your experience. What did this all mean to you? ALSO, look at the experience through different sets of eyes. Perhaps talk to others who had the same experience, and ask them what they did, how they felt, and how they feel about it now. Perhaps put yourself into the shoes of someone very different from yourself, and “see” the experience from their perspective.

3. Look through the theoretical information that applies. Perhaps go on-line to gather more empirical data. From your experience and reflection, in combination with a deeper understanding of the theory behind the situation, explain your understanding of the model. Do you want to revise parts of the model based upon your experience and understanding? Go ahead and do so.

4. Explain how you will use this new knowledge. What is your action plan? If you have questions or ideas from the previous points, how will you experiment and test them out? Be very detailed and thorough in your action plans. Will you need resources? Which ones? Do you need a support group or a review group - can you use the people you were with in the workshop? Are there any contingencies you need to plan around?
ENERGIZING THE CLASSROOM

Notes:
✓ This is a good first workshop
✓ This is a good workshop to involve senior faculty in presenting since it can easily be done by two leaders – one experienced, and one ‘trainee’
✓ Workshop provides lots of tips to use in all sorts of ways afterwards
✓ Need file folders for everyone, paper and pens
✓ Need index cards
✓ Most useful to have a laptop for each small group to take notes on
✓ Flip charts are useful
✓ Funny prizes for groups
✓ Know how attendees can get index cards, flip charts, and other materials for their classes
✓ Get everyone’s email address, preferably ahead of time
✓ Bring several flash/thumb drives to download material from laptops
✓ Make sure the workshop leader(s) have a list of ideas for each topic being discussed, to prime discussions or respond to questions
✓ Depending upon interest and participant backgrounds, the VARK learning preferences can easily be infused in this workshop (see later in this section for more information about VARK)
✓ By adding to the list of group activities, or cutting some out, you can vary the time of the workshop – it can easily be cut to an hour, or expanded to a full half-day
✓ Plan follow-up activities, flyers, emails, luncheon discussions to help attendees solidify new behaviors
ENERGIZING THE CLASSROOM

Welcome and orientation to the workshop 8 minutes

Hand out index cards
   Briefly list your experiences using student groups in class, or collaborative learning, etc

Hand in

Form a line based upon number of courses taught
   Divide line into thirds
   Have each ‘third’ count off
   All 1’s go together, 2’s, 3’s, etc so end up with groups of 3 people

Have 4 minutes to get to know each other

[Facilitator review the cards to get an idea of the experience of people in the room]

Why engage students more in the classroom 5 - 7 minutes

For Students
   ✓ increased student learning,
   ✓ connect to learning preferences and styles
   ✓ higher order thinking ala Bloom
   ✓ build student abilities to collaborate – career skill
   ✓ student engagement in class shown to lessen dropping out
   ✓ less boredom
   ✓ more chance to build independent learners

For faculty –
   ✓ concentrate on what students are learning
   ✓ focus more on higher order thinking
   ✓ weave in more that fits with different learning styles/preferences
   ✓ use classroom assessment techniques
   ✓ less boredom
   ✓ chance to experiment rather than supply almost all of the classroom talk time
**Objectives**

- For people new to the idea – to excite you about the learning opportunities that occur with engaged students
- For people with some experience – to add to your repertoire and further intrigue you

**Group Tasks**

**TASK: USING STUDENT’S PERSONAL EXPERIENCES TO ENERGIZE CLASSES**

- how can we use our students' past experiences to "energize" class. Make a list of as many ways as you can think of. There will be a lack-of-value PRIZE for the group that has the most ideas!

5 minutes

Call ‘time’ and have each group share two ideas – mention to listen particularly for ideas the individuals doubt they’d ever have come up with themselves – also commit to providing the full list to everyone after the workshop so no one has to madly type or write

Give out the ‘prize’

Next

**TASK: WAYS TO INVOLVE STUDENTS DEEPLY IN CLASS DURING THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF THE COURSE.** No need to duplicate anything on your first list, but how can we establish a ‘norm’ for a particular class that students are supposed to be involved all the time? Again, make a list

5 minutes

Call ‘time’ and have each group share two ideas – remind to listen particularly for ideas the individuals doubt they’d ever have come up with themselves – also remind that facilitators will be providing the full list to everyone after the workshop so no one has to madly type or write

Give out the ‘prize’

Move people – perhaps have all the ‘1’s’ move to a new group

Next

**TASK: WAYS OF HAVING STUDENTS WRITE DURING CLASS TO AID IN LEARNING – WHICH INSTRUCTORS DO NOT HAVE TO GRADE!** Again, make
a list and remind them that there may be overlap with earlier ideas, so no need to write something again

5 minutes

Call ‘time’ and have each group share two ideas – remind to listen particularly for ideas the individuals doubt they’d ever have come up with themselves – also remind that facilitators will be providing the full list to everyone after the workshop so no one has to madly type or write

Give out the ‘prize’

next
TASK: WAYS OF GETTING STUDENTS TO LET US KNOW WHAT THEY ARE LEARNING, WITHOUT HAVING TO TEST OR GRADE.

5 minutes

Call ‘time’ and have each group share two ideas – remind to listen particularly for ideas the individuals doubt they’d ever have come up with themselves – also remind that facilitators will be providing the full list to everyone after the workshop so no one has to madly type or write

Give out the ‘prize’

USING GROUPS TO ENERGIZE CLASSES

Note that one way to energize a classroom is to put students into groups that take on tasks. Probably many of the ideas small groups came up with already involve putting students in groups. So, what are the advantages of using small groups for an exercise such as we just did, versus simply having the entire class contribute to one list on the board, flip chart, or while instructor types on a computer? 3 minutes

Discuss as a full group

As a full group brainstorm issues involving using groups in class

List all the issues

Tell group that they will get to pick the top five to discuss. Each
person gets three ‘votes’ on the honor system. Consider all the issues for a minute and determine how you want to ‘vote’.

Take one issue at a time and have people ‘vote’

Top five ‘vote-getters’ get discussed

[Facilitator note: An excellent follow-up, if possible, is to address the other issues via email following the workshop]

Mention how a similar exercise can be done to identify issues in a class reading that students need covered.

Summary:

**TASK: PRODUCE A SHORT SUMMARY OF THIS WORKSHOP.** Each group determine what you wish as a summary of this workshop.

5 minutes

Discuss value of having students do this at end of a section of the course, or topic

Depending upon the level of student intellectual maturity, will have to teach how to summarize (an excellent thinking skill)

****************

ALTERNATE EXERCISE IF TIME ALLOWS: Mention that frequently instructors summarize material for students, but that does not help students learn to summarize, so last group task is to take 10 minutes and design an interactive mini-lesson that will help students learn how to summarize material.

****************

Final issues or concerns?

Discuss as necessary

**Resources to help instructors energize classes**

On campus materials, websites, and people who can assist

**Follow-up activities**

Emails
Flyers
Luncheon for attendees
Further workshops of interest

**Feedback on workshop**
Hand out feedback form based upon a classroom assessment technique that attendees can also modify for use in their classes

**********

**ALTERNATE EXERCISE TO DO BEFORE SUMMARY IF TIME ALLOWS (WILL TAKE A MINIMUM OF 35 MINUTES):** You are presenting a difficult subject in your course. In the past many students have not understood it. Hence, you have lectured, usually for nearly two hours. Your lecture is good, and you have some good humor and stories, but you are concerned that students still are not understanding the key concepts. What alternatives can you design to "energize" this subject?

20 minutes

Circulate around the room, assisting the groups if necessary, and modeling possible instructor behavior when students are working in small groups during class

Call 'time' and lead discussion of ideas from the groups
Time for this depends upon time available
Workshop: Engaging Students in Class Using Student Groups

Notes:

- This is an introductory workshop, not for people who have used student groups much, but it assumes that no case needs to be made for using them at all. If faculty resistance to using student groups in class is expected, add information about the experiential learning cycle contained in the “learning cycle” workshop.

- This model is organized into major sections that are in bold, with instructions to the presenter underlined. Non-underlined material contains suggested comments by the workshop leaders.

- Workshop leaders – this is most effective when two presenters work together, showing the advantage of collaborative work and providing slightly different approaches to material. This also gives participants two people to communicate with after the workshop. The workshop design easily allows one leader to be experienced, and the other to be a ‘trainee’.

- Consider producing a short guide to using groups that includes the nuts and bolts information in the workshop to hand out at the end, and commit to adding what they have added during the workshop to the material. This is either an excellent activity for your group of senior faculty who are assisting with your learning-centered teaching project, or as a follow-up activity for the participants to work cooperatively on.

- A room with movable chairs and tables is best, but use a classroom.

- It is useful to have newsprint and easels for different listing different topics.

- On all material handed out, provide the email address and phone number of someone people can contact with questions or issues following the workshop.

- If your presenters are not conversant with the terms ‘cooperative learning’ and ‘collaborative learning’ give them some basic information just in case a question comes up. If you are not conversant with these terms, at the level of this workshop the distinction is not significant and should not dissuade you – but just in case someone asks, you should know the basic definitions. If a question arises and anyone wishes to pursue it more than with a simple question, a perfect answer is that this is a wonderful topic for a follow-up luncheon and discussion.

- As with all workshops, commit to follow-up activities. Create a distribution list and send out periodic information about using student groups (some ideas are in other sections of this publication). Have a lot – a lot – of follow-up activities for introductory level workshops.
Consider follow-up workshops such as the BOPPPS lesson planning workshop, then the Learning Cycle workshop, and then the VARK workshop. Although not included in this book because NCSPOD has a separate publication, a classroom assessment workshop is an excellent way to keep faculty focused on what students are actually learning and how they are responding to different techniques the faculty member is using to help them learn. Keep faculty members involved in changing their teaching behaviors involved in new learning themselves.

One follow-up activity can be involving participants in gathering student feedback concerning how students are experiencing group projects in class, what they are learning.

A second follow-up activity that can be fun is to have the group collaborate to create a list of ‘what to do to make sure that groups do poorly’ – or something similar.

If you have some experience with Appreciative Inquiry, the initial questions that partners ask each other may look familiar.

Bring plenty of paper and pens, enough for everyone. It is even better if you can arrange for a laptop for every small group.

Bring newsprint, colored markers, and anything else that can contribute to an engaged workshop.

Make copies of the worksheet handout (after revising to include more space for people).

Bring some (not too many!) resources your college has available for people, back issues of The Teaching Professor, The National Teaching and Learning Forum, local newsletters, brochures or pamphlets on using student groups, short articles on collaborative or cooperative learning activities.

Books by Roger Johnson and David Johnson are excellent resources. I favor Barbara Millis’ book **Cooperative Learning for Higher Education Faculty** for those faculty members who need/desire a book to help guide them as they build their expertise. Yes, ‘cooperative learning’ is a subset of ‘collaborative learning’ and everyone can learn all about the differences online.
Engaging Students in Class
Using Student Groups

Welcome and introductions:
Keep these brief

Consider skipping an icebreaker, even if the group does not know each other too well, as initial activities will put them in contact with three other people at least

Getting started:
Now, since this is a workshop on using groups in class, it would be ironic if we did not use groups. So, we’ll start with a group of two.

I need you to please line up by estimating the distance from this spot to where you were born. The front of the room is closest, the back of the room is farthest away, so if you were born in town, you will be close to the front of the room.

Once they are lined up. Please say ‘hi’ to the people next to you. You won’t be with them, but say hi anyway!

Now, let’s fold the line in two. The front of the line folds back so you are standing next to the last person, etc. The two of you right in the middle, don’t you move an inch!

Okay, everyone is now in a pair. You will work with each other for some time now, so please sit with each other.

Give them a couple of minutes to get situated and to say hello to their new partner.

What is the best experience you have ever had working with a group of people? What was going on? What did you do? What did others do? How did you feel?

You each will have 10 minutes. While you are listening to your partner, please keep him/her talking. Probe more deeply if time allows. Keep that person talking for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes is up, switch.
When they are done
Okay, please take a five minutes to work together to make a list of what made your experiences so great, noting especially those things that you both referred to.

After time is ‘up’
Okay, let’s see as a full group if we can identify the characteristics that make an excellent group experience

*Share one of your points as we go around the room*

Keep doing so until all ideas are out there

*The list is quite long*

Now, each pair join a pair
Take the list we just developed, and identify what for you are the top 10 things. You have 8 minutes.

After time is ‘up’
Now you each have a list of what you are trying to achieve for student groups in your classes. Keep it where you will often see it, and measure your activities when using groups against this list. Your key question is, ‘Will what I am about to do help create at least one of these conditions?’

Any questions, concerns or issues with what we have just done?

*Do you feel more engaged and involved with others in this workshop than you usually do at the beginning of most? Remember this. Use of student groups right at the beginning of classes can be energizing for them as well!*

**Objectives:**
Here are some objectives we have developed (put them up)

By the end of the workshop, participants will

- Have practical information regarding the nuts and bolts of using student groups in class, including suggestions for group size, composition, and initial tasks
- Have a model of excellent group functioning
- Have outlined an idea for using student groups in a class
- Report being more comfortable when thinking about using student groups in class than they did previously
- Have at least one resource person they can contact with questions, issues or concerns following the workshop
Questions, concerns, issues, others you wish to add?

Now, let’s move to some practical issues

**Concerns and issues:**
Put a list of all of the following topics up
Size, group composition, time for groups to complete tasks, what the instructor should do when students are in groups, what tasks to give groups, how often and when to use groups – the following sections, so they can see what you plan to cover anyway. Then

Ask – *What else should we cover?*

Add to the list as they contribute

**Size:**

*If an instructor is just starting to use student groups in class, what is a good number of students per group?*

2 or 3

*Small groups are much easier to manage. Once you feel comfortable with this size group, you can move up to 4 or 5. More than 5 students per group are difficult to manage, for the students and for you. Stick to using that number with students who are used to working in groups, and when you are comfortable with all the issues that are likely to arise.*

**Group Composition:**

*Should an instructor let students form their own groups?*

*Probably not at first, as students tend to sit with their friends, and you may get a lot of socializing at first. This can be dealt with once you are comfortable using groups in class, but why worry about it at first?*

*So, move students around. Have them line up by height, or birthday, or alphabetically by the first letter of their last name, or as we did today and then count of by 2 – 3. Then, have them sit with each other.*

*Issues, questions, concerns with forming groups?*
How long should we wait before using student groups in class?
Ideally, do so within the first class. The earlier you start, the earlier you establish a class norm that ‘in here, we work productively and often in small groups’

If you use student groups in the first class, what might you have them do?

You have 4 minutes to come up with at least 10 ways to use student groups in an initial course meeting (if you wish, add online meeting!)

When they are done, take ideas from the full group and make a list

Issues, questions, concerns with forming groups?

Initial group tasks:
When starting out, give groups small tasks that can be completed in 5 or 10 minutes.

We have some ideas about what to use student groups for in an initial course meeting. Perhaps you are considering having students interview each other, and hand in the results, or have them identify why they are taking the course – personal information that is not too personal, but that lets them get to know each other a little bit.

You will need to give them some activity to get to know each other. It is part of group development, and we’ll discuss that in a bit.

Next, give them short tasks related to the content of the course. For example, perhaps give them the task of identifying the five key concepts in the reading for a class, or write them up in their own words, or figure a way to explain a key concept to someone who missed the class. Toward the end of class, ask them to come up with five ways to apply what they have studied in the past week.

Right now, you have five minutes with your group to identify as many different group tasks as you can imagine to give students in a typical class

After time is ‘up’ have full group develop a comprehensive list

Giving students at least one group task per class reinforces what they are supposed to do, and how they are supposed to do it

Questions, concerns, issues?
What should the instructor do when students are in groups?
Walk around the room. Get involved with the students. Tell them that they can raise their hand if their group is stuck on something and needs your help as a consultant. Listen. Use your physical presence to keep them on track.

Questions, concerns, issues?

What does the role of consultant entail? I’m no group expert.
Consultants help groups over sticky points, not by giving answers, but by helping them frame their discussion and/or figure out what questions they have. Consultants notice conflict and help students work that out (which may involve asking them to see you outside of class). Consultants do not take sides in most disputes, or answer the question “which of us is right?”

How much time should we give groups to do a task?
When starting out, give short tasks and short time frames. The short time frames force students to stay on task, and this means less time for you.

As you get more comfortable using groups, you can give more complex tasks and more time.

One more very practical point. When first using student groups, tell them that you will identify when half their time is up, and then when they have only one minute left. Gradually, throughout the course, drop the ‘half-time’ notification.

Questions, concerns, issues?

How much is this worth on my grade?
Deal with evaluation issues up front. If you are going to count group work toward class participation grade, identify about how much it is worth. Make certain that group work is clearly worth something on their final grade, and not an insignificant 1 – 3%.

Questions, issues, concerns?

What happens when the groups have finished their work?
First, always – always – debrief the activity. Take ideas and comments from groups. If it is an activity, such as ones we have done, when it is appropriate for the full group to make a list of something, do so. Make certain to say that students should add to their group’s notes so they get everything. Do not add your own material to the list unless it is absolutely necessary. Think about the message that sends.
Concerns, issues, questions?

Let’s move on to how we need students to act when in a group

What are some behaviors that help groups function well?

Let’s develop a handout that we can all use on things that help groups function well and things that hurt group performance. This is something we can give to our students (and, modify slightly and use for online groups as well)

What helps?

With your group, you will have five minutes to add to this list

For example, things such as
Coming prepared with all homework done and STUDIED!
Listening to other members – listening
Not engaging in side conversations

What will your group add to this?

After time is ‘up’ have full group add to list

Next, what hurts group performance?

Things such as
Not taking responsibility for being an equal partner in the group
Showing off or kidding around when not appropriate
Daydreaming, not participating
Dominating the discussion

What else can your group come up with? Again, you have five minutes

After time is ‘up’ have full group add to list

Now, use these lists with students. Hand out right away, before using groups. Reiterate the first few times you use groups. Post on the course website.

What else do we have for concerns or issues?

Discuss points they raised earlier that are not done yet, and ask again
Reflection on best experience
Take a few moments and think back to your initial interview today. Were there some points raised in your ‘best experience’ or that you remember from your partner’s ‘best experience’ that you want to raise for us to discuss? Take a few minutes to first think about it yourself and jot down thoughts you have and then to discuss it with your group. What else do we need to discuss?

Application
Hand out the “work sheet” and give them time to fill out. 15 minutes. Give groups 20 minutes to discuss each other’s ideas (longer if they need it and want it). Make sure to tell them when 15 minutes is up and that they have 20 minutes to discuss everyone’s plans in their group.

Issues, concerns or questions that have arisen because of your discussions?

Wrap-up
Looking back at our objectives, what have we not achieved for you? Discuss, add to, or offer to handle individually in more depth later

All of the practical suggestions, and ideas and lists that we have developed today will be sent to you as soon as we can compile them.

Give them the name of whomever will serve as ‘student work group advisors’ and how those people can be contacted

Have them complete a feedback form on the workshop itself
Worksheet to plan group work

Please take 15 minutes to fill out what you can on this sheet. You will have a chance to discuss plans with your group, to get their feedback and advice when you are done. You do not necessarily have to begin with the first point below. Begin with the issues that are largest for you at this moment if you wish.

Class I plan to use groups in:

How will I introduce groups:

When will I first use them:

How will I form the groups:

How many students will be in each group:

How will I describe my role once they are in groups:

How will we establish rules for behavior when in groups:

How much of their grade will be based upon group work:

How will I communicate information about their grade to them:

How will I grade group work:

The first three group tasks be:

The amount of time needed for each task:

Issues or problems I anticipate may arise include:
Learning Cycle Workshop

This workshop is based upon the work of David Kolb and a number of others who have validated the ‘learning cycle’ concept. It is a useful introductory workshop on student-centered teaching as it models constant engagement, while providing a theoretical underpinning and rationale for learning activities that require students to be very active participants in their learning.

By taking out the BOPPPS process and discussions, you can modify this workshop to fit within a much shorter time frame. Concentrating solely on the learning cycle and ways to engage students means you can do this in an hour and a half.

Consider using only a couple of the learning cycle charts during the workshop. They make excellent topics for a short, targeted email following the workshop. Perhaps every two weeks send an email to participants with one paragraph on the subject of the chart and the chart itself.

Materials needed: paper, pens, flip charts, markers, experiential learning cycle charts, other handouts on student-centered teaching, BOPPPS handout if you intend to share with them. Have all charts, graphs, and diagrams available electronically on the teaching/learning website for faculty to download.

Consider sharing the BOPPPS process with them during ‘Bridge-In’ so they know what is coming and have a way to characterize their notes (and also to perhaps intrigue a few of them with a class design process)

Make up some ideas on each of the areas you are going to ask them to work on, to share during discussion – it will be important to show that you also could have lectured and demonstrated a lot of this, but choose to include them and use their expertise. Consider anticipating what types of concerns people will express in the last section under ‘Participatory Learning’ and prepare answers or lists of ideas.

This workshop can stand on its own, without an extensive introduction to Kolb’s theory. It might prove to be a useful model for a workshop aimed at part-time faculty, or when workshop time is limited. It also can serve as a ‘teaser’ for a later full-fledged Kolb workshop. This latter use has the added advantage of introducing Kolb’s theory and the different learning modes to people, enabling the follow-up workshop to concentrate almost entirely on learning styles and implementation issues.
Introductory Learning-Centered Teaching Workshop on the Learning Cycle

Bridge-in
Welcome

Introductions

Workshop on moving from a “teaching model” to a “learning model”

Focus on students and what they are actually learning

Lecture is an ineffective method of learning, teacher-focused, not learning-focused
  Why is this important?
  How much do we care what we say, compared to what students learn?
  We want to concentrate on what students are learning about our subject!

So, this workshop focuses on students
  What they are learning
  What they are NOT learning
  What they need to learn
  How we will know that they have learned something

We’ll be working on ways to involve students in their learning by using many different approaches

Form groups of three in some amusing manner

First task, you have 8 minutes
  In your group, come up with 10 ways to involve students in the first class of a course, and identify the three you like the best

After 8 minutes, share top three ideas from each group

Ask if each group will commit to having someone send an email within a
week of the end of the workshop today to leader, to send out to everyone so we all have all the ideas we generate today

Okay, so we have some ideas about how to bring students into their education the first class period

**Pre-Test**

*With your group – next job is how would we develop a pre-test for teachers to see what they know about learning-centered learning? 10 minutes*

Share a few ideas and pick one to actually use

Get information from the group, using one of their pre-test techniques

*Note how quickly we have moved to involve this group in the lesson. No long lecture. Through this pre-test discussion, I am going to explain the experiential learning cycle, because now I have the information that I need to give you information that you have just said you do not know. Also, I can all upon people to help out who do know some things. This is easy to do in class, and helps involve students right away.*

Put Cycle up, and hand out

  - Review it and why it is important

**Objectives:**

*Now I need you to write 1 – 3 objectives you have for today*

  - Share with your group
  - See if you can agree upon 3
  - You have 10 minutes

Share one objective from each group – see if full group has some agreement

*Now, what might we do with the ‘different objective’ – the ones that only one or two people might have – lets bring it down to students, how might we deal with specific objectives that a student might have that are not shared by many in the class?*

*Back with your group, how might we do this with students, for a course and for major course segments? 10 minutes*

  - Discuss ideas briefly and remind that will need ideas from all groups in
order to build a repertoire of ideas for all

**Participatory Learning**
Describe the terms on the learning cycle - more if a group very new to teaching, less if a more experienced group. Also describe WHY it is important to understand this learning cycle, and how it will benefit them in class.

*In groups again, you have 15 minutes*
Take (give each group one of the learning modes) and identify as many different learning activities that you can which you believe fit this learning mode. Also put top 5 or 6 on a flip chart to show everyone. [Note: circulate around the room to help with identification of what the different modes mean, to offer assistance, and support]

After time is up, have each group present their flip chart - BRIEFLY. Discuss and ensure understanding of the terms and how teaching/learning activities fit with each category on the learning cycle chart.

*Questions/concerns with this?*

*This is a simple concept at first, but more complex to implement in class. However, we will have a lot of ideas about different activities that we can engage in to help us use all phases of the learning cycle.*

Explain the tendency to start with the same phase of the learning cycle each time. Students learn in different ways. Some like to learn from each of the perspectives. Describe how typical college professor presents material. Theory first through reading and a class lecture. Then discussion, then perhaps (and not usually) an application or two. After that, possibly (although again not usually) an attempt to apply to new situations. This engages those students who like to learn from what area? Discourages students who like to learn from which areas?

*Now, this one is alone. Reflect upon this lesson, concentrating on both the learning cycle and deeply and actively involving students in class work. Identify what potholes and bumps you see that may get in the way of you implementing this. What can you and other people (specify exactly who) do to make it easier for you to implement participatory exercises in your classes. You have 10 minutes.*

After time is up [note: if people seem still engaged, give more than 10 minutes], ask them to share ideas, concerns with their group. 9 minutes to discuss, so everyone has 3 minutes.
If people want, can share their lists with workshop leaders, meet and discuss how to remove some potholes and bumps.

*As a full group, how might we use this type of exercise with students?* Take ideas and list them on flip chart, remind people that you will send these out

*Now, with team – top 5 concerns regarding this type of student involvement in class. For example, how many students to put in a group, or how to give directions, etc. You have 8 minutes*

Take concerns one from each group, then around again, and answer them as best as possible.

**Post-test**

You know what is up. *Identify 10 ways an instructor could check to see what students have actually learned during a week, or a course segment – preferably in time to work more on weak areas. You have 10 minutes again. Choose your top idea to put on the flip chart and share. Tie to objectives and results of pre-test*

Share ideas with the full group
Make sure to ask how they would describe the way this concept was introduced to them. What learning modes did this lesson incorporate, and how?

*Each person take your objectives and rate how well they have been achieved. Also, for any that are unfulfilled, make some notes about how they might be achieved. This will be handed in for us to use and, possibly, help you with after this workshop.*

**Summary**

Take 5 minutes and summarize what was most important to you that we did today? What did you learn/experience/feel that was important to you?

Use summary as an example of how to deal directly with what students need to learn, not what we need to teach!

*As a full group, let us get some ideas about how could we introduce this topic to students, and get them to help us do two things:*

1. *Use the learning cycle throughout our classes*
2. Make certain that we do not start at the same place all the time.

Remind people that you need each group to write up its ideas and send to you or post online. Do the same thing with full-group discussion points.

Ask them to attend a luncheon in 2 weeks to discuss progress and share concerns.

Identify other follow-up activities, materials, resources that will be coming to participants.

Remind them of the faculty members they can contact with questions, ideas, concerns, challenges – people who can provide confidential advice.

Watch for people who are particularly engaged, try to identify 2 – 5 who might become your leaders in the ‘active-learning’ component of your program. Figure out how to make it easy for them to say yes to becoming involved and hard to say know – what incentives are there for them, and what do they not have to do if they become involved in this?
Lesson Planning Integrating the Learning Cycle

**Bridge-In:** At what point in the learning cycle will I start this lesson? If I am going to use CE, how will I design an experience that connects what students already know, have experienced, or have studied in this class with what we will study today?

**Objectives/Outcomes:** Exactly what do I expect students to learn today, and how can I express that in clear terms?

**Pre-Test:** How will I determine what my students already know from class readings and study, so that I do not cover material unnecessarily, or leave something out that I think they know, but which they do not?

**Participatory Learning:** How will I vary the class so that sometimes I lead with lessons emphasizing AC, and sometimes CE? Once concepts are initially presented, in what ways will I alternate between AE and RO techniques? Or, will I expand the post-test and summary sections to use AE and RO extensively?

**Post-Test:** When will I choose to use an AE or an RO approach here? How should this be connected to the level of the course?

**Summarize:** How do I ensure that I do not always use RO techniques here? How do I recognize the difficulty level of the course in what I do here?
Learning Cycle

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Abstract Conceptualization

Reflective Observation

How a person likes to take in new information, new learning, some mixture of active and conceptual.

How a person likes to make sense of new information, some mixture of active and reflective.
Students want to be more active

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Abstract Conceptualization

Reflective Observation

Students often want teacher to be more active
Learning Cycle – Applications

Students less likely to struggle with applications farther out from the center.

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Abstract Conceptualization

Reflective Observation

Students more likely to struggle with applications farther out from the center.
Students more likely to struggle with lectures farther out from the center

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Abstract Conceptualization

Reflective Observation

Students less likely to struggle with lectures farther out from the center
Learning Cycle – Taking Notes

Students more likely to struggle taking notes farther out from the center

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Reflective Observation

Abstract Conceptualization

Students less likely to struggle taking notes farther out from the center
Learning Cycle – Group Work

Students more likely to favor working in groups farther out from the center

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Reflective Observation

Abstract Conceptualization

Students less likely to favor working in groups farther out from the center
Students more likely to struggle with theories and models farther out from the center

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Abstract Conceptualization

Reflective Observation

Students less likely to struggle with theories and models farther out from the center
Learning Cycle
‘What Works’ vs. ‘What Is Right’

Students more likely to be interested with ‘what works’ farther out from the center

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Abstract Conceptualization

Students more likely to be concerned with ‘what is right’ farther out from the center

Reflective Observation
BOPPPS: Lesson Planning for Busy Faculty

Rationale: Very few faculty members have had formal education in developing coherent lessons. Consistently, faculty members report that they ‘learn’ how to prepare lessons from instructors they had, materials provided by publishers, or trial and error. There are books on lesson planning, and some are excellent. However, not many community college faculty members have time to read a book (which appeals only to one or two learning styles anyway). How about a lesson planning system that faculty members can learn in five minutes and spend years fine tuning?

BOPPPS was developed by the very clever people who run the Instructional Skills Workshop programs. Designed specifically for community/technical college faculty members, this system is intuitive, clear, based upon solid learning principles, and simple. What more could we ask? THANKS ISW FOLKS!

Notes:

- An excellent first workshop
- Get a few senior faculty to become excited about BOPPPS and presenting it to new faculty and part-time faculty and you will have dual-purpose professional development. This is a very easy way to start the process of using experienced and enthusiastic faculty to be the lead people in different aspects of teaching and learning – and a workshop to help them do exactly that is included right after this one
- BOPPPS is a good place to start faculty with intentional class planning. Consider following up in a few months with intentional course planning (see other workshops on this subject)
- Handouts for the following workshops can also become flyers, and the subject of emails
- Need flip charts, colored markers, paper, materials for participants to use when designing ‘participatory exercises’
- One notebook computer per pair, linked together so pairs can show work to class is a nice technological touch that your workshop leaders can also use to illustrate ways to use computers in class
- BOPPPS is an excellent lesson-planning system to connect with both classroom assessment and learning styles. It should be, since the Instructional Skills Workshop gurus designed it to fit with learning styles, and classroom assessment fits perfectly. The real value of BOPPPS lesson planning occurs when faculty members integrate at
least some learning style approach with classroom assessment and use that within the BOPPPS framework. Intentional teaching with a student learning centered focus. Significantly, having faculty members think about how to integrate classroom assessment techniques or class activities connected to diverse learning styles is very significant faculty development itself. A perfect program!

• An extremely useful activity for faculty members who have been through a basic BOPPPS workshop is to have them work on ways to use classroom assessment techniques throughout BOPPPS. This might be the basis for a half-day retreat or exercise, or pairs of faculty members might work on developing a list of suggestions for a website, or a handout for part-time faculty, or even design a second level workshop for their colleagues who already know about BOPPPS but do not know about classroom assessment.

• Any of the popular approaches to learning styles can be integrated into BOPPPS, but particularly the two presented here – VARK and Kolb. Exactly the same type of activities can be developed for learning styles as are mentioned for classroom assessment above. In fact, if some faculty members prefer VARK and others prefer Kolb’s approach, you can run both projects at the same time. The material generated will fit together quite well.
BOPPPS: Lesson Planning for Busy Faculty

Welcome
Have to do a quick check.

How many of you know each other?
Do we want to do an icebreaker to get to know more about each other?
  (Based upon responses, either do one or not)
  (Based upon responses, have people briefly identify selves)

Now, who has some experience writing intentional lessons following a set format, such as BOPPPS?
  Mention that will use this information to focus workshop

Bridge-In
The idea here is to connect the new lesson to what students already know, have experienced, or can relate to.

Pair up for this exercise – see if you can make a list of 10 ways that an instructor could ‘bridge-in’ during a first class in an introductory course in a subject – you have 8 minutes

Share ideas, and discuss as a group
  ??About why this would be important to do??

Note: if the group has done work with classroom assessment this is an excellent time to make clear connections with several CATs

Let’s create three different visual designs to illustrate the “Bridge-in” concept – you have 6 minutes

Share and discuss importance of using visuals in a college class

Objectives/Outcomes
Why are objectives important?

Did I ask before who has had experience writing objectives (or outcomes, as we can use them as well)?
Together lets design three objectives for this workshop
With your pair, take 6 minutes and see what you come up with

Share and determine three objectives (or outcomes if that is preferable)

What are the common requirements for an effective objective?

Specific to the people involved and the situation
Action-oriented – mentions specific actions
Challenging, but not impossible
Observable outcome – measurable by a reasonable person

Note: once again, a perfect place to connect with several CATs

Pre-test
We want to show students that you respect what they know, their experience, and determine how to focus the lesson to be most effective

For example, in this workshop I started with the question “who has some experience writing intentional lessons following a set format, such as BOPPPS?”

How might we do this in a course, say in the fifth week? See if your pair can come up 6 generic ways to do this in 8 minutes
  Follow up with additional questions based upon their responses

Again, how about creating three different visuals illustrating the “Pre-test” concept – you have 6 minutes

Share and discuss importance of using visuals in college classes
  Note: introduce several CATs if the group has classroom assessment background, or a good place to introduce briefly if they do not

Participatory Activities
Okay, we are going to present BOPPPS to a group of new, part-time instructors and we are up to the ‘participatory activities’ section of the workshop

In pairs, you have 12 minutes – design this part of the workshop. What will you present to these new part-time faculty members to illustrate ‘participatory activities’ for a typical course?

Share and discuss
Note: determine ahead of time if you will copy and present various active learning techniques, and/or resources at this point

**Post-Test**

*What different ways might we use to Post-Test this workshop? You have 5 minutes as a pair to come up with some ideas*

Share and discuss results

*Why do a post-test before the summary?*

*Helps inform the summary, giving you more ideas about what students need you to summarize – focus on what they are learning, and not learning*

Note: a good place for CATs

**Summary/Closure**

*Think for a minute – how can an instructor know what to summarize?*

Share and discuss

*Think for a moment, what are some different ways that an instructor can summarize?*

Share and discuss

Get out that summary need not be at the end of the lesson, but could be posted on course web site, other creative ways to do that – including having students write summaries and share with each other, having little to do with the instructor

*What do you need as a summary of this workshop?*

*Handle questions as they come*

Note: an excellent spot to include more CATs, or reinforce brief introduction to classroom assessment.

**Applications**

*This is not part of BOPPPS, but a useful addition*
List three things that you plan to do over the next two months using either something you learned today, or a thought that occurred to you during our time together today – does not have to be about BOPPPS

Distribute envelopes  
*Put what you just wrote in the envelope, and we will send it to you in two months*

Set up a meeting luncheon in 2 – 3 weeks to discuss implementation, compare notes, share ideas about implementing BOPPPS

Identify two items you will be sending out to all attendees to help them with their BOPPPS course planning. One per week.

Hand out workshop feedback questionnaire

**Note:** Immediately after the workshop identify 2 – 6 people who are candidates to be ‘peer advisors’ on BOPPPS, and determine how you will approach them (and what you have to offer to make it easy for them to accept and hard to reject)
Class Planning – BOPPPS is TOPPPS

Need an easy tool to help prepare intentional classes? Try the BOPPPS approach, developed by people in the Instructional Skills Workshop network.

**Bridge-in.** Connect what you are about to teach with what students already know, have experienced, or can relate to. All learning needs a context, and showing students the connections to past learning helps provide just that. This begins the learning cycle.

**Objectives/Outcomes.** Exactly what is it that you wish to accomplish? Be very clear, with observable outcomes. Telling students up front lets them know where they are going. When possible, involve students in developing these to get more ‘buy-in’.

**Pre-test.** What do students bring to the subject at hand? Do any have previous knowledge or experience? Do some have perceptions or misperceptions about the subject? Knowing where students stand in relation to a new subject allows an instructor to craft explanations, activities, and questions to the particular people in front of her/him. “Pre-test” does not imply that it is a test or quiz, but some way of determining where students stand before starting the lesson.

**Participatory learning.** Involve the students deeply in what they are learning. The more senses that are involved, the better. Having students experience an activity, study a theory or principle, connect it to what they already know, and then use it in some way addresses major points in the learning cycle.

**Post-test.** Check with students to see what they have learned (you may be surprised!). As with the pre-test, “Post-test” does not imply that it must be a test. An effective way to post-test for students who like real-world applications is to ask them to determine ways to apply what they are learning in their lives immediately.

**Summary/Closure.** Based upon the post-test, provide students with a summary of what they have learned. This need not be in class. It may be something that you provide via the course web page. Alternatively, perhaps select a small group of students each week to write up a summary for the class and post it to the web site. Be creative about how you handle this. Again, involving students helps complete the learning cycle.

For more information, please contact:
BOPPPS Lesson Planning

Bridge-In: How will I connect this lesson to what students already know/have experienced?

Objectives/Outcomes: Can I involve students in developing these?

Pre-Test: How can I find out what students already know that is relevant to what we are going to study?

Participatory Learning: How can I deeply involve students in this lesson?

Post-Test: An innovative way to determine what students know and what we need to do more with for the next class?

Summary/Closure: How can I complete the learning cycle?
BOPPPS Lesson Planning – Review

**Bridge-In:** How well did I connect this lesson to what students already know/have experienced? What went well, what might I have done better?

**Objectives/Outcomes:** How did I involve students in developing objectives/outcomes? Did it go well? What did I do that I should remember in the future? Was there anything that I should change?

**Pre-Test:** How did I find out what students already know that is relevant to what we are going to study?

**Participatory Learning:** How long was it before students started to do something in class? In what ways did what students did reinforce the key concepts we covered today? What went well? What should I change?

**Post-Test:** Exactly how do I know what students learned and what I need to cover again?

**Summary/Closure:** How did I summarize key learnings, or give students chances to do this? What might I do better?
Workshop
Preparing Faculty Members to Present BOPPPS to Their Colleagues

Notes:

1. Ahead of time, ask participants to think about what they need most from the workshop, and what they feel very comfortable with. Consider using a ‘feedforward’ assessment sheet with questions they can fill in and get to workshop leaders prior to workshop.
2. Consider limiting the workshop to no more than six participants at any one time.
3. With faculty members who are new to presenting workshops to other faculty members, BOPPPS is an easy and safe one to start with.
4. All participants in this workshop should have gone through your basic BOPPPS workshop, and be using BOPPPS for at least a semester before being considered for this workshop.
5. Consider having the first group of faculty to be trained develop a name for the ‘group’ that makes sense to them, and heed the comments about incentives under the section on sustaining a program.
6. If you do not form a formal committee or group, at least get a distribution list of faculty members who will be conducting BOPPPS workshops, and use it occasionally to send out materials. Consider using something such as Google Groups to create a common web presence for your BOPPPS team.
7. Determine ahead of time how you will rotate faculty members through workshops, and in particular who you will use first (and why)
8. Need flip charts, colored markers, paper, materials for participants to use when designing different parts of workshop, notebook or binder for participants to keep notes and materials.
9. Laptop computers make it easier for faculty to take and keep notes and ideas for use when they are presenting and working with others – one per group.
Preparing Faculty Members to Present BOPPPS

Welcome (Bridge-In)

Workshop leader(s) introduce self and, if necessary or desired, do short ice-breaker with participants

*Overall goal today is to prepare you to present BOPPPS workshops to other faculty members, particularly part-time faculty, and newer faculty members*

*However, specific objectives will be tailored to your individual needs*

*So, in relation to BOPPPS and presenting BOPPPS workshops to other faculty members, please jot down 2 – 3 things that you need covered today, and 2 – 3 areas where you feel very comfortable*  
  (Give examples if necessary)

*What kinds of questions and comments are we likely to get when we present the idea of bridge-in to faculty members? (Depending upon the group, either ask to think individually for a minute and write down ideas, or take ideas as they come)*

Discuss points raised by participants – involve them in answering as much as possible

Objectives/Outcomes

*Okay, since we will be teaching people how to do objectives, gather in groups of 2 or 3, share what you need to get today, search for similarities and write objectives for as many as you can that are shared 12 minutes*

(Workshop leader acts as a consultant to groups, helping write objectives)

Pull group together and determine common objectives for the workshop  
(Reinforce objective-writing skills as necessary. Also, if any are not easily covered through the points below, they will have to be added to this workshop design.)
What challenges are we likely to encounter as we teach faculty members both that objectives are necessary for intentional teaching, and how to write them? (Depending upon the group, either ask to think individually for a minute and jot down ideas, then share – or take comments as they come)

Discuss challenges

Involve them as much as possible in ‘answering’ challenges

Remind group that they are not expected to have the answer to everything, any more than they are expected to be able to answer every question in class – that is what the group is for. Can tell participants that you will ask colleagues on the BOPPPS Presentation Team and get back to them.

It is okay not to know!

**Pre-Test**
Show group that they just did the pre-test

*In groups of 2 – 3, see if can list at least 8 different ways that someone could do a quick pre-test in a class* – 10 minutes

Share ideas with the full group

*What challenges do we anticipate presenting the idea of Pre-tests to colleagues? (Use whichever method you have been using to get challenges listed)*

Discuss challenges and possible responses, again involving them

**Participatory Learning**

Okay, we know lots of things to do here. How about generating 6 ideas about how we could present this portion of the workshop, other than the way we did it in our original workshop?

Take group ideas and process

*Now, how about challenges we will get around participatory learning? (Use whatever method you have been using to get challenges out)*

Discuss challenges and possible responses – involve them in responses
Post-Test

In groups of 2 – 3, take 10 minutes and develop one or two different ways of presenting the ‘post-test’ idea to faculty members

Share ideas with the full group (depending upon time and group, consider giving them a few more minutes and have different groups actually take the full group through their idea – present the idea as they would to new faculty)

How about challenges we see around presenting the idea of post-tests?

Discuss challenges and possible responses – they generate responses

Summary/Closure

Share ideas with the full group (depending upon time and group, have each sub-group present one of their ideas to the full group, using the full group to represent the people attending a workshop on BOPPPS)

Wrap-up

Go back to objectives and compare to what actually did

Which objectives still need to be addressed
Handle those

Issues or concerns that have arisen?

How will we stay in touch?
Take ideas from the group and determine a next meeting/luncheon
Also email distribution list, blog, threaded discussion?

Most useful to do workshops in pairs, so how should we do this?

What expectations do participants have of Faculty Development people in terms of support and assistance?
Lesson Planning – Further Steps

Once faculty members have begun to think about intentional teaching and class design, it is time to branch into different areas. The particular approach you take will depend upon your analysis of your campus’ needs and readiness.

Learning preferences may fit best with your campus. If so, consider presenting a VARK workshop and developing materials to encourage faculty members to consider the different ways students learn using the VARK framework.

Alternately, perhaps your campus is working hard on outcomes and making outcomes and assessment an integral component of every course. In that case, perhaps the outcomes workshop and follow-up activities are most appropriate.

Or, perhaps you feel that the next step is to present material on classroom assessment, to add that leg of the chair to your faculty members’ repertoire. This is an extremely significant component of any learning-centered teaching approach, for if faculty members cannot know what their particular students are learning and how those students are responding to different instructional techniques, assessment and outcomes assessment is far less effective.

Once you get the second component of a comprehensive approach done, the rest are easier to inculcate. Faculty members on the road to learning-centered teaching will be much more interested in what comes next than they were getting on the road in the first place! Additionally, if you are able to continue to build cadres of ‘peer advisors’ in various areas, you will have a built-in innovator group for future activities (and, most probably, cheerleaders for innovative teaching!).

Just remember that you will probably need to present BOPPS workshops and whatever you choose to do second at least once a year, twice if your college uses a lot of part-time instructors. A comprehensive approach must include involving part-time instructors in learning-centered teaching.
Course Planning For Learning-Centered Teaching

For a quick guide and resource for faculty to use to plan lessons, particularly lessons connected to outcomes assessment, try the British Columbia Institute of Technology’s job aid on lesson planning, which also can be downloaded and printed (thank you BCIT!). If you go to the general site, they have short guides to download and use on many subjects.


There is a single best site for comprehensive course planning in higher education, and it is at the University of Oklahoma, where the ‘retired director’, L. Dee Fink, has created an incredible resource that should be bookmarked on every faculty development page in the country. Others have good pieces of course and lesson planning. Fink has a comprehensive approach, based upon solid research, that is clearly defined and described for faculty members. Further, they make the material available to anyone in higher education!

Go to the site and see how the topics are arranged. Link to the general page, or break down topics with phrases your faculty will understand and put various choices on your web site and direct your people to specific sections of the Oklahoma site. You can even download and print off copies of most of the material. His ‘significant learning’ approach to course planning makes an excellent sophisticated workshop for faculty. Buy his book, Creating Significant Learning Experiences (Jossey-Bass), for all of the people who finish the workshop as it will be a significant addition to their professional library.

http://www.ou.edu/pii/significant/index.htm

What follows is a model of a course design workshop, aimed dually at helping faculty members experience the beginnings of an intentional course design process, and to interest participants in working together on course design. After this workshop, perhaps you will be able to get some faculty members interested in course design, and work with them on something like Fink’s ‘Significant Learning’ process.
**Taking Teaching Seriously:**  
**Intentional Course Planning Workshop**

Consider downloading background information from the University of Oklahoma’s Program for Instructional Improvement’s website on “Significant Learning”. Also, the University of Massachusetts’ Office of Academic Planning and Assessment’s website features an excellent guide specific to building a course with assessment as a key.

Oklahoma’s site, which features Dee Fink’s ‘Significant Learning’ course design process, is at http://www.ou.edu/pii/significant/index.htm.

The University of Massachusetts’s site, which features Martha Stassen’s approach to course design and assessment, is at http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online_handbooks/course_based.pdf.

If you need a short guide, download this list of questions from BYU’s Center for Teaching and Learning (it is based on Fink, but short) and modify them for your institution. http://ctl.byu.edu/?page_id=320.

The general page for the BYU Center also has additional resources on Fink’s approach (click on “Course and Teacher Development” and then the specifics) http://ctl.byu.edu/.

Whether you use these or not, consider downloading material from the following page and possibly using the chart. http://www.ou.edu/pii/significant/integratedcoursedesign.htm.

Times for various activities are given throughout this model, but be careful as experience has shown that it varies widely between groups. When most of the faculty participants are experienced teachers, much can move quickly. People new to course planning will take more time. As you plan this workshop, work with some local faculty on timing. Make up flipcharts with directions for each stage on separate pages so you can post them as you give instructions. Consider doing this workshop with a partner. It helps to have two people able to walk among pairs to help, answer questions, note difficulties to bring up to the full group, etc. While people are working alone, or in pairs, it is most helpful to circulate among them to answer questions. Ahead of time encourage people to bring the course text or readings, and
other material that they are sure they will use in the course (or lists of what that material is at least).

Materials needed:
Consider having a laptop for everyone, as it speeds many things up. If not, bring plenty of paper, have college catalogs and other materials available – including college and program outcome statements and anything on assessment and rubrics that is college-wide or program-wide, paper and pens, highlighters if no computers, flipcharts and markers for those who will want to plan visually (with storyboarding for example),

Variations:
A useful variation is to have everyone take the Teaching Goals Inventory prior to the workshop. Just make sure that they have done that. Give them the guidelines, that is no more than 3 – 5 ‘Essential Goals’ and then work on how these goals relate to relevant college and/or program outcomes. This has the advantage of getting people to think about their course prior to the workshop.
Taking Teaching Seriously: Intentional Course Planning Workshop

Welcome and introductions

If people do not know each other, do an ice-breaking activity

Ask them to pair up, with one rule – must not be with anyone from same discipline

There is one question to ask your partner, and then you need to keep them talking about it for 5 minutes
  Take notes so you can help them remember it later
  At end of 5 minutes, switch

  Question is: "Please tell me about the best course you ever took, at any level of education, and what made it so great for you"

  Remember, keep your partner talking for 5 minutes – get details

Call ‘time’ after 5 minutes and get them to switch interviews

At end of 10 minutes, ask them to join with another pair.

Each person take up to 2 minutes to summarize what your partner said. Your goal is two-fold, (1) compare notes and see if there were any similarities in what you spoke about, and (2) see if someone mentions something that you would add to your 'best course' or that is something you’d like to incorporate into the course you are going to work on today. Write it down!

Tell them they will have 10 minutes for this activity to allow for a bit of slippage!

Get full group back together and sitting in pairs only

Any issues or concerns that we need to discuss?

  Discuss as necessary
**Workshop Outcomes**
Ask them to identify two key outcomes for themselves for day – things that they want to know/be able to do and to write clearly so you can read them

*You have five minutes for this, and then please give your personal desired outcomes to me*

Ask them to hand theirs in, so you can examine

Post your workshop outcomes

*Let’s see if we can come to agreement on no more than 3 – 4*

**Teaching Goals Inventory**

Let’s move to the Teaching Goal Inventory that you completed on the course you are working on today.

*Now, if you have more than 5 ‘Essential Goals’ please discuss the course with your partner. Partners – help each other whittle ‘Essentials’ down to five, or fewer. This is a course, not a curriculum!*

*If you both have five or fewer, please review your ‘Essential Goals’ for the course with your partner, explaining as necessary*

Questions or concerns about the Teaching Goals Inventory?

**Role of your new partner for the day**

As a partner, your role is to act as a ‘consultant-partner’

**Role of the ‘consultant-partner’**

*Remember – this is their course, not your course!*

Ask open ended questions

Offer constructive ideas

Listen actively – what is your partner trying to do and how is she/he trying to do it?

Respond to their concerns and issues with questions, not answers

Questions or issues with the role of the ‘consultant’?
Note: For the rest of the workshop, consider whether you wish to keep everyone on the same schedule – or to print off directions for the rest and allow pairs to work at their own rate, with you (and anyone helping you) serving as a consultant to pairs, walking around and sitting with them as needed. There are benefits to both allowing pairs to work on their own, and keeping all on the same schedule.

*The intent throughout the activities is to introduce key aspects of course planning and give people time to at least begin each stage, if not finish. It is okay if you do not finish a particular activity, because you can finish it up later. It is important that you engage in each activity.*

**Next step - Begin with the end in mind! You have 20 minutes for this**

Next, connect your top 3 - 5 goals with relevant college-wide outcomes and program outcomes if the course is part of a program

You may add up to 5 other important aspects of the course – specific key content, or skills, or attitude changes that extend the more general goals and connect directly to either college-wide outcomes or program outcomes

You must do this very explicitly. Exactly how do your Essential Goals and other activities fit with the outcomes? Keep working until you believe you have a very clear and explicit statement, which you will share with your partner for review and discussion in the next phase.

**Okay, now it is time to discuss what you have down with your ‘consultant’ – you will have 30 minutes for this, so 15 minutes each**

Review what you have for goals and why they are so important

Anything highlighted, spend extra time on

Partners - Listen carefully and help your partner clarify, extend, or revise

Your role is to ask open-ended questions, not to reflect your particular perspective or to give advice

  * Ask why?
  * Ask how?
  * Ask about student readiness
  * Ask how these tie in with others in the program/discipline
  * Particularly ask how they connect to the instructor’s values
Give some time checks and make sure to get people to switch at 15 minutes (or sooner if people move quickly through this phase)

It will be useful to circulate among the pairs as they do this
When time is up

*Questions or issues that have arisen that we need to discuss as a whole? We can discuss individual questions or concerns with particular courses, outcomes, or linking them together, but now is time for more general discussions or questions?*

**Okay, it is time for more questions to answer, first working by yourself – you have 20 minutes to do this**

Put these up or hand out to participants

*How many students are likely to be in this course?*

*What level of students – first or second semester, or sophomores?*

*Is it a course taken by students new to the college, or perhaps a capstone course?*

*Expectations about student abilities when they enter the course?*

*Is there any other student demographic information relevant to course design?*

*Is the course required in any programs? List all of them*

*Does the course fit a general education requirement? Be specific*

*Are there outcomes that the course is either supposed to address, or contribute to? Be specific*

*What equipment will the course have? Need?*

*What type of classroom is best? Most likely to get?*

*Are there multiple sections of this course that need to be accommodated?*

At the end of allotted time
Please share answers with your ‘consultant’ – you will have 10 minutes each
   Again, consultant role is to listen for what seems inconsistent
   Help each other be as clear and consistent as possible
Announce when 10 minutes is up so they switch partners

Any questions or issues that have arisen that we need to discuss as a whole?
Again, you will be able to discuss particular issues related to your course
with me or your partner at a later date, we’re interested in items that may affect many of us here today at this time.

Okay, you have what you need in order to begin with specific course activities. You will have 45 minutes for this activity:

For each of your overall course goals and each of your other most important items in the course – what specific learning activities will students engage in? For example, will they do group activities, have homework assignments, do readings, will something be covered in lectures or specific class activities? Be very specific about exactly what they will do.

Remember, a learning cycle, where students read/do/see/listen to something, then have a chance to do something with it, and finally reflect upon their experience and what it means to them, is most effective at incorporating new learning.

This is another time to make certain to be available to participants by circulating and looking for people who may be struggling or in need of assistance.

At the end of the time

Okay, it is time for consultants again

Take 10 minutes each and describe what you are planning. Consultants, as always in a constructive manner, listen for inconsistencies, vague areas, areas that perhaps need more thinking. Do not impose your own values and approaches on your partner.

Make certain to announce when 10 minutes is up so that people switch

Any questions or concerns that have arisen?
Now it is time for the final phase – assessment – you have 20 minutes for this

You need to be very specific about exactly how you will measure student success at achieving the outcomes and learning that you wish. Be sure to include ways to measure progress toward achievement so you can intervene to help students who are getting off-track. How will you track your teaching to see how students are responding to your teaching?

[Note: If you created a graphic to show connection between course design, assessment and student learning – display it again here]

Now we have the final time for your consultant

Take 10 minutes each and describe what your assessments will look like, when you plan to do them, and anything else that you have written about assessment.

Consultants, listen especially for how the assessments match the key course objectives, key learning, and any outcomes that the course must address. Look for areas that are vague, or possibly inconsistent. You are not listening for assessments that match the way you like to do things, but rather that your partner wishes to use.

Remind them when 10 minutes is up

Call time
Any questions or issues that have arisen?

Wrap-up

Thank everyone for coming.

Reiterate that many people were probably unable to complete all tasks within the time allotted, but hopefully that everyone has enough to continue on their own.

Remind that you are available for ‘consulting’ (and anyone else who has volunteered to help)

Remind that they may wish to continue working with their personal
consultant from today because that person knows quite a bit about how their partner approaches teaching and learning. Most important is to build a course that fits what you wish to do, that is planned intentionally, that properly fits into a curriculum and meets the outcomes associated with the course – and, most importantly, that enables students to learn what they are supposed to learn!

This is an excellent beginning.

**To continue with course planning**

Note: use according to your audience. Use material of your own development, or material from U of Oklahoma, U of Massachusetts, or BYU as appropriate. People will need more details as they continue.

Remind that course development and assessment is an iterative process, as we constantly revise and adjust because of changes in our students, our knowledge, and our desired outcomes

Identify any college resource people again

**Follow-up Activities**

Consider a luncheon in 2 – 3 weeks

Emails and other materials you will supply for assistance

**Feedback on the workshop**

Give your feedback form and identify how you will provide them with the details and your responses

Note: Immediately after the workshop identify 2 – 6 people who are candidates to be ‘Peer Advisors’ on course development, and determine how you will approach them (and what you have to offer to make it easy for them to accept and hard to reject)
Outcomes, Not Agony: Making Outcomes Work For Us – Training Faculty Members To Present To Other Faculty

Purpose: To train faculty members to present outcomes workshops to other faculty members.

Notes:

- This is a full day workshop
- See notes for Peer Advisors also
- A good outcomes and assessment program can be a vital link in a comprehensive learning-centered teaching program. While not ignoring the fact that many faculty members detest outcomes assessment, at its best outcomes and related assessments focus attention on what students are learning, and promotes intentional teaching and lesson planning
- It is impossible to be intentional about learning-centered teaching unless we know where we are going. Outcomes are the destination point for a course, and certificates and degrees. Without a destination point, faculty members and students are simply meandering. Sometimes meandering works, and it is a great strategy for certain kinds of learning tasks, but certainly not most
- The goal is basically to deal with the very real concerns faculty members have about making presentations and leading workshops for peers
- It is most helpful if a lot of supporting material is gathered beforehand, and made available
- If a portion of a website can be allocated to resources that will support faculty, that is most helpful
- No breaks are identified in the workshop since so much is based upon discussion that it is difficult to gauge how long issues will take. Fill in breaks as you need them
- Regularly urge people to keep their notes for use when they do their own workshop
- If possible, get a laptop for each pair of participants, as this will facilitate note-taking, and allow them to build a model workshop along with their notes as they proceed through the training workshop that follows
- Determine what the college expects of people trained as presenters (must they present? Must they present more than once? How large will the workshops be - consider small ones of fewer than 12
• Unless you have experienced faculty presenters, strongly suggest that people present in pairs, at least initially, and that people be able to pick their partners
• Need copies of training materials
• Need copies of materials on web site for participants to download and revise for their particular needs, copies of college outcomes guidelines and statements, accreditation guidelines and requirements, and models of different types of acceptable outcomes statements
• Pads for participants to make workshop notes on, pens,
• Flip charts and easels
• Distribute ‘feedforward’ information sheet ahead of time (compile the results and provide to participants as shown at beginning of workshop - these will show you how to orient the workshop, and possible areas to spend less time on)
• Ask all participants to bring two copies of all outcomes they have written (assure them that it does not matter whether these outcomes are perfect or not!)
• Ask participants to bring any resources they think may be useful to share with others (web sites on assessment, guidelines for writing outcomes, etc)
• Set up one flip chart to the side so you can keep track of the model workshop that will be built
• Food and drink
Outcomes, Not Agony:
Making Outcomes Work For Us

Welcome and introductions
Make certain that all participants know each other

Goal for workshop: To provide participants with the resources to present effective workshops to peers on the subject of outcomes assessment

How would we write an outcomes statement for this workshop? Please work with one other person to craft an outcomes statement - and do not be concerned that it is not perfect because you only have 5 minutes

Call time and ask them to share ideas from different pairs, asking people at the same time to say two things about themselves

Lead discussion of what makes an effective outcomes statement
Use materials from campus, or that people have brought

Now, let’s look at what we, as a group, had on our ‘feedforward’ sheets that were sent out ahead of time. Again, in pairs, please review the results from this group and see if there are any there that surprise you, or that intrigue you, or that you wish to discuss further. Again, you have five minutes.

Call time and ask people to share ideas, again asking people to make a brief comment from their pair and share one thing about each of them that they think others do not know.

Why would this type of activity be particularly important for each of us to do prior to any workshop we might run on outcomes assessment? Take a minute to think and jot down an idea or two, then we will discuss

Discuss ideas - and the statement that you used to ask them to take a minute, jot down ideas and then discuss with the group as it gives people with different thinking preferences a chance to participate (not just those who have ‘quick’ minds)
So - the questions on our feedforward document - do they fit the needs of our college? Should we consider modifying any of them for our situation?

Discuss and spend time on revisions as they deem important

On this flip chart to the side we are going to build our ‘model workshop’ - which is not to say that each of us cannot deviate from this model as we present our own workshops. This is simply a model that we can use. I will write down ‘Welcome everyone’ and then ‘discuss feedforward document results.’

I am sure that many of you recognized that we substituted discussing the goal for the workshop for a more typical ice-breaking exercise, story, or joke. That was on purpose, as many faculty members have been through a lot of ice-breakers and this may be a way to slip another one to them - use it as you wish.

Discuss as necessary - put times on the ‘model workshop’ sheet

First, let’s look at how having clear outcomes for a course helps most students learn more effectively. Take 5 minutes with your partner and list any ways you believe clear outcomes help students learn, then we will discuss it as a group.

After five minutes, have the group identify all the ways that outcomes help students learn (make special note of how involving students from even before the course starts by having outcomes posted on the course website, included in all written material, etc helps orient them to the subject and what is important).

So, we want to start the content part of our workshops by focusing on how outcomes help students learn - I’ll put that next on our ‘model workshop’ chart

Put on the chart and allocate time for this discussion - open up thoughts if necessary about why this will help orient faculty participants to the workshops and reduce resistance

Next, one of the challenges we all will have with this topic is dealing with the feelings that some faculty have about the topic. Let’s look at these for a few
minutes. Let’s deal with positives first.

There are benefits to individual faculty members of having clear outcomes for a course. What are some that you can identify? You have 5 minutes - this time join with another pair.

At the end of five minutes call time
Once more, we will discuss our points, and see if there are other benefits to add. We will discuss these for about 10 minutes.

Now, this is a topic we want to put on our model workshop so let me add it – ‘Get the benefits in early!’

But, not everything is going to be fun. Why do some faculty members resist establishing clear outcomes, and even more, resist paying attention to them once established? With your group of four, please jot down a few ideas. You will have 5 minutes for this.

Call time
Now, as a group we will discuss these ideas, and see if there are others to add. We will discuss these for about 10 minutes.

Discuss points as they arise

At this point, we want to identify the five negatives that we are most likely to encounter in a workshop. We will determine these as a group. We will take maybe 10 minutes for this.

How shall we decide what the top five negatives are for us at this institution?

Lead discussion of how to do this, making note of ideas that they can use in their own workshops

Get them to identify top 5 negatives

Next, we are going to split back up into pairs. Working with your partner, identify at least two strategies that can be used to defuse each negative in a workshop or discussion. You have 7 minutes before we share ideas
Call time
We will take the next 10 minutes to discuss ways of handling possible negatives.

Discuss strategies, pointing out that people probably want to take notes

Issues, concerns with benefits to faculty members, and some of the resistance we may face?

Discuss as necessary

It is time to look back at our original goal statement for this program. Are we on track?

Discuss as necessary

Okay, time to look at actually writing outcomes.

What guidelines, suggestions, or ideas do we have to make outcome statements at our institution the most effective possible for students and faculty members? Think for a few minutes, and you and your partner jot down ideas that you have.

Call time
Okay, let’s add to our ‘model workshop’ the next section “Writing Effective Outcomes”

And, let’s discuss what makes an effective outcome

Look at your ideas for words to use - what action verbs can we encourage people to employ - and should we make up our own list for the college or do we have a resource to provide people?

Discuss and make somewhat of a list, or a more complete one if no resource is shared

How about words that we would encourage people to avoid? Can we identify
some of them - and does anyone have a resource to share about these also?

Discuss and make a short list, or longer one if no resource is shared

So, let’s add to our ‘model workshop’ - “Words to Use and Words to Avoid”

Now, do we have anything on the number of outcomes a particular course might have? Let’s talk about this and see if anyone has a resource to share.

Discuss

Are there advantages to having more than five for a course?

If someone comes in with 14 outcomes, and let’s say they look pretty good, for a course, how can we help that person whittle them down to a manageable number? Can we, for example, ask them questions such as

a. Can we subsume any under others? That is, do some require the ability to do others, so if we include a ‘later’ or ‘larger’ one do we automatically get another one?

b. Or, can we rewrite any so that they will include others?

Other questions we might ask someone to help her/him cut down on the number of outcomes for a course?

So, let’s put on our model workshop - “Number of outcomes per course’

How about another issue - that sometimes a faculty member will put such large outcomes in a course that it is almost equivalent to the outcomes for a degree or certificate?

How might we handle this situation?

Discuss

So, we’d better put “Course outcomes versus program or degree outcomes” on our workshop list
How about the levels of outcomes that people have? Should we be encouraging faculty members to consider the level of the course they are teaching and how cumulative outcomes, such as development of critical thinking skills, should vary between a course typically taken in the first or second semester, and one that is typically or always taken right before a student graduates?

How will we handle this? How can we help faculty members?

Discuss, gather ideas, and remind them to take notes for their use later!

And, we’d better put this on our workshop topics list

Is it also okay, if we are stuck and cannot seem to help an individual faculty member get beyond some issue to say that we’ll get them help from a colleague after the workshop? We can use each other as peers helping peers, right?

Make this point clearly and strongly! We are not pretending to be tremendous experts who know everything, only peer advisors trying to help out!

Now, how about affective outcomes - those areas where a faculty member wants a student to change attitudes, or to open up? How do we write those so that they are measurable?

Discuss and gather ideas for later use

Is this something we want to include explicitly on our workshop outline?

Okay. Now how about the requirement that we write outcomes that are, in some way, measurable? We’ve looked at this a little, but what if we have a real problem with this. What are some strategies we might use to help someone? Take five minutes with your partners and see what ideas you come up with

Call time, discuss and gather ideas

Again, should we put this on our workshop outline?
Looking back at our ‘feedforward’ comments and questions, what else do we need to cover today?

Explicitly go back to items and discuss as necessary

Looking at presenting - what issues do you have now? Take a couple of minutes and think, talk to your partner if you wish.

Discuss as necessary

Summary:

Identify what the college expects of workshop presenters

Identify what is in it for presenters

Review workshop design that is posted and make sure everyone is comfortable with it

Identify resources the college will make available to workshop presenters

Identify how presenters will be selected for workshops (at least initially, make sure that pairs do presentations, not individuals)

Ask what their expectations are
Learning Preferences and Styles
A Key to Learning-Centered Teaching

While it is very possible to run a learning-centered instruction program without including a learning preferences or learning styles component, many practitioners find it another useful way to engage faculty members. There are a great many learning preference, learning style, cognitive style, learning/personality inventories, etc. Two popular and useful ones are Neil Fleming’s VARK learning preferences and David Kolb’s learning styles. They will be used here for illustrative purposes, not because NCSPOD or anyone else is endorsing them.

Of the two, Fleming has some advantages.

1. It is fairly intuitive for many faculty members. In particular new teachers find it an accessible theory, and one that they can implement in their classes immediately.

2. Purely from anecdotal sources, many students also find VARK helpful to expand their learning strengths and improve their study habits.

3. Fleming, as of this writing, has a comprehensive web site, with considerable material for faculty members and students.

4. There is a free, online version of the test, and Fleming currently allows downloading the latest version for use in classes.

5. Fleming is clearer that a preference does not indicate a strength!

If you decide to use VARK extensively, purchasing the materials available will give you many more resources to draw from. Also, there are now site licenses available for the test which will be helpful if many students are going to take it.

Kolb’s system has been around longer, coming actually from the field of organizational behavior. There is considerably more research available to support the theory, and practitioners have been using it in business as well as higher education (the 4-MAT theory, aimed more toward younger people
is directly from Kolb). However, it takes more time for faculty members and students to understand the theory and implications for their teaching/learning. Note that there is also considerable debate regarding the validity of Kolb’s theory (as there is for all learning theories, cognitive theories, and the like).

As of this writing, there is also not a single ‘Kolb site’ with supporting information for faculty members or students as Fleming has developed. The test itself is expensive, and available only through Hay Resources, an arm of an international management consulting company, although many faculty members have developed their own versions. This questionnaire included with information here does not supplant the Hay version, which has had extensive reliability and validity studies done, but this test may be useful for illustrative purposes.

Finally, Kolb’s system is used by a great many of the Instructional Skills Workshop facilitators. If you have an ISW program (congratulations – it is marvelous) on campus, contact the facilitators to see if they have developed materials using Kolb for students or faculty members.

A few samples of materials for students and faculty members are included in this section, for both VARK and Kolb. If you have a peer advisor program using your faculty (see the section of this manual on peer advisors for information), both teaching mini-workshops and developing materials for students and faculty members is an excellent professional development exercise.
VARK Learning Preferences Workshop

Notes:

• The basic resource is a comprehensive web site run by Neil Fleming himself. Access it at www.vark-learn.com

• His VARK test may be taken online, or it may be downloaded and copied (as of this writing) for educational purposes. In addition, there are study guides for students, material for teachers, background information, books and software, and discussions of various learning preference issues related to VARK. Fleming has designed a ‘one-stop shopping’ site!

• Before conducting a VARK workshop, provide a one sentence description of each of the five learning modes and ask participants to pick the one, or ones that they feel fit them best. After taking the test, ask people to compare the results and reflect upon them.

• VARK is so accessible to students that it is easy for instructors to ask students to go to the web site, take the test, read their results, and download any of the ‘study without tears’ sheets that are appropriate.

• Make certain all participants have taken a VARK questionnaire prior to the workshop and have their results. If the option is still available on the VARK website, consider forming the workshop as a ‘class’ and gathering composite results by having all participants take the VARK questionnaire online.

• Consider having at least a computer hooked up to the VARK website to project materials and information that Fleming has developed and generously made available to all.

• Bring materials for people to use during the session, for visual and kinesthetic activities.

• Consider providing a laptop for each team.

• Have at least one copy of all of Fleming’s materials available for faculty, and preferably more. Buy copies of the book.

• Bring flip charts, markers, and tape
VARK Learning Preferences Workshop

Welcome
Welcome participants

If necessary, introduce self and have them do an ice-breaker

Break them down into pairs that they will work with throughout the workshop

Bridge
Ask some or all of the following questions:

Ever have a student “zone out” in class?

Ever looked at a student’s notes and find them incomprehensible?

Ever have a student tell you that she/he couldn’t take notes?

Interested in reaching more students with class activities?

Interested in learning something more about your own learning preferences and how they affect your teaching?

Explain a bit about the purpose of VARK and Fleming’s approach to learning preferences, no more than 3 – 4 minutes.

Now, since we are studying this approach to learning preferences, but we are also looking at how to teach this to students, take 4 minutes and with your partner, jot down some ideas about how we might introduce VARK to our students.

Share and discuss

Pre-test
Either review information from ‘feedforward’ questionnaire, or ask questions below
Who has heard of “learning styles” as a way of looking at different ways that people learn?

If some answer “yes” follow up:
   Anyone heard of VARK learning preferences?
   Pursue as necessary

Anyone taken a learning styles test?

How do you feel, did you feel, about taking those tests and the results?

For those who have knowledge of learning styles, and/or VARK, do you use them with your classes?

Depending upon answers, note what people have some background in

With your partner, again take 4 minutes and discuss how we might gather information from students about their prior experiences with learning preferences surveys and their knowledge about how they prefer to learn.

Share and discuss

Objective/Outcomes:

Post these as well, in format that can be added to

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Correctly explain what VARK stands for
- Explain at least four key characteristics of each of the VARK learning preferences
- Explain to another faculty member how using VARK can help motivate students to actively learn in class
- Explain at least four ways to include activities in class to hit all VARK preferences
- Find additional information about VARK styles from materials handed out, and understand how to use that information
- Have at least two questions about VARK

Does anyone have something else that she/he would like to suggest, or ask about in terms of learning for today?

Add their ideas
Would there be any advantages of having students participate in developing objectives/outcomes for particular sections of a course? With your partner consider this and then we will discuss. You have 4 minutes.

Share ideas and discuss

**Participatory Learning**

Have people identify their primary style, or styles. Place a grid on the floor and have them physically place themselves on the grid.

Hand out basic VARK descriptors from website or own materials

Discuss each style in turn

Standing discussion – does your placement here seem to be where you believe you actually are, in relation to your learning preferences?

You and your partner are going to design a complete class assignment and class period where you teach the VARK concept to a group of students all of one type.

We will leave out the “R” style because we pretty much know how to teach to them. Let’s go around the room and take the “V” “A” and “K” styles in order

Do that, with each pair getting a VARK style in turn

Take a couple of sheets of flip chart paper, or more if you wish, and describe/draw/storybook how you will teach VARK to a group of people all of whom have your style

You have 15 minutes

When time is up

Now, you might wish to take a few notes as other teams present, and incidentally, are there people with any learning preferences that are likely to wish for more information before doing the exercise?

(yes – R and A)

Each team present their ideas (or take one for each style and just ideas from a second or third group that has “V” style, or “A” style, etc)

Discuss with full group - getting in information on all four styles
Refer to other material that you have on VARK that is available

Questions about use of VARK?

Discuss as necessary and appropriate

Post-test
Ask participants...

What should our post test of this be
  For a “HIGH - V”
  For a “HIGH - K”
  For a “HIGH - A”
  For a “HIGH - R”

You have 5 minutes (start part of the teams on “V” and go down, the other half on “R” and go up)

  Share ideas and discuss

Do you feel weak in any area? We can discuss briefly now, and use this information to follow-up with you after today.

  Discuss and take notes

Summary

We could give the same exercise for the summary as we used for the ‘post-test’ right? If we simply review the key points verbally, that will appeal most to one style. If we look back at our objectives/outcomes and also put up key points about what VARK means, then that will hit other styles. If we summarized by having each pair summarize key points in the way they felt most appropriate to their learning preferences, that would appeal more to “K” learners. Right? Or no?

  Discuss as necessary

Give resources for follow up, remind of the VARK web site
www.vark-learn.com
Remind that a key power of this system is that it is easy for students to understand, to learn how to take notes from books/materials and class, and to help themselves be more conscious learners.

**Application**

Ask each person to write a note to her/himself, identifying three ways that he/she is planning on using something learned today.

- Share ideas as appropriate

Ask group to identify 4 – 5 things that leaders can do to help them implement VARK in their classes.

- Make a list

Get a commitment to gather again in a few weeks to discuss implementing VARK, share ideas, ask each other for advice, and explore different ways to use student learning preferences.

Hand out the VARK class planning sheet and VARK class review sheets

Note: Immediately after the workshop identify 2 – 6 people who are candidates to be ‘Peer Advisors’ on VARK, and determine how you will approach them (and what you have to offer to make it easy for them to accept and hard to reject)
Lesson Planning Integrating VARK Learning Preferences

Bridge-In:  How will I connect what we are going to cover with what students already know, have experienced, or have studied in this class?  Can I use a graph or design to connect past with future?

Objectives/Outcomes:  Exactly what do I expect students to learn today, and how can I express that in clear terms?

Pre-Test:  How will I determine what my students already know from class readings and study, so that I do not cover material unnecessarily, or leave something out that I think they know, but which they do not?

Participatory Learning:  How will I teach the concepts, using all of the VARK learning preferences throughout?  How exactly will I ensure I get “V” and “K” into the class early?

Post-Test:  How will I know students have mastered the outcomes I specified?  How will I vary the ways they demonstrate this so that I make sure to sometimes include visual and kinesthetic expressions?

Summarize:  How will I summarize key points, using VARK?
VARK Lesson Planning Review

After presenting classes, it is important to review what you did. Once you feel comfortable with using VARK learning preferences, you may wish to use a classroom assessment technique to get student responses as well.

Bridge-In:  How did I use VARK to cover information and ideas we had already studied, past student experiences, etc to help students connect with what we studied today? Exactly how did I use VARK in the first five minutes of class?

Objectives/Outcomes:  In what ways did I use different learning preferences in covering my objectives for the class, or am I planning on doing it differently each class?

Pre-Test: What student learning preferences were especially well served with the way I handled the pre-test? Can I modify this so that it appeals to students with another learning preference?

Participatory Learning:  How did I get “V” and “K” into the class early? What chances did I give students with “V” and “K” preferences to shine? How did I reinforce learning through “R” and “W” preferences?

Post-Test:  How did I give students with different learning preferences a chance to show what they now know?

Summarize:  Were my plans to use different VARK preferences in the summary successful? How can I integrate “K” especially into this portion of the class?
Kolb Learning Styles Workshop

Implementing a learning-centered learning culture on campus requires, at some point, that faculty members think deeply and clearly about how students learn. The VARK approach will get them started, but probably will leave many thinking that there must be more.

This next section is based upon the learning style theory proposed by David Kolb. It has widespread use in higher education, and even more in business. While there is considerable research that advocates say vindicates Kolb’s theory and approach, this approach to learning is not definitive. Many other theories exist, of course. However, this particular approach has the virtue of including Kolb’s ‘Learning Cycle’ and that, along with the particulars of the theory, makes it particularly useful for colleges attempting to implement student-centered teaching.

Another interesting aspect of Kolb’s theory is that a great many community college faculty accept it. The ‘face validity’ of the theory is very high since so many of us can relate to students who just seem disengaged from certain traditional course activities. A typical comment goes something like this. “Ahhh, of course Accommodator students won’t read a five page syllabus. They just want to get going. Hmmm. I’d better figure a better way to present the course.”

Once faculty members inculcate the learning cycle in their courses, and start actively matching course activities and particular approaches to learning, we are well on our way to that elusive student-centered teaching approach!

There is no incompatibility between Fleming’s VARK learning preferences and Kolb’s theory. In fact, they complement each other. Fleming’s is easier for most faculty members to absorb first, and, hence, is better presented first. Once faculty members have accepted the idea that people do, in fact, learn differently and that they can teach to different learning preferences, they are ready for Kolb.

However, implementing Kolb’s approach is not as simple as using VARK, because many more faculty members perceive it to be far more complex. One aid for them is the extensive materials included here. There is also additional material available from Hay Resources, although that is limited. Kolb’s own website includes a very extensive bibliography, and some additional data. However, most of what is available on the Internet or in writing involves research into the validity of the theory, not the kind of nuts
and bolts implementation ideas that so many faculty members want. There is some additional material available on the ‘4-MAT’ system, which is based directly on Kolb, and which was developed for younger people (and probably to avoid copyright issues).

While follow-up activities definitely increase the likelihood of implementation of any of the approaches in this book, they are essential when implementing Kolb’s theory. Having some email tips and techniques sent out, doing targeted luncheons with faculty using Kolb, training several ‘peer advisors’ to help other faculty members implement Kolb’s theory, and providing consistent and readily available assistance to faculty members are all very helpful approaches.

There are two activities that will definitely produce results, however. First, train several faculty members to present Kolb-based mini-workshops for part-time faculty, and perhaps for New Faculty Orientation. Second, get a group of faculty members to produce some teaching/learning activities that incorporate Kolb’s learning cycle and learning styles for your website.

What follows is a sample full-day workshop introducing Kolb’s theory. After that there is an extensive introduction in the form of a self-study guide to Kolb’s theory and implementing it in a college course. That handout includes a self-test so that people can get an idea where they may stand within the Kolb framework. A valid and reliable test is available at Hay Resources. The handout also includes a complete set of self-study materials that can be put up on your website, or that may form the actual basis of the workshop. Also, there are sample Kolb-based teaching tips developed by my friend, Kim O’Donnell from Naugatuck Valley Community College and currently the Eastern Region Vice-President of NCSPOD. These are included as examples of what you may wish to get a key group of faculty members to work on in your institution.
LEARNING STYLES WORKSHOP

Notes: Purchase LSI tests or use ones included, determine what sections of learning styles instructor orientation package to copy, make and bring copies of teacher roles, objectives, other questions and handouts as necessary. Get flip charts on easels for each group you plan to have, and different colored markers. If possible, use masking tape to separate the room into four sections, mimic the Kolb grid. Get copies of some ‘learning cycle’ charts from the earlier workshop on learning cycle. Get as much background material as possible up on your teaching/learning website.

Welcome & Introductions

Icebreaker (10 minutes)
Pair up and answer the question – “the most boring way for me to learn is”
You have five minutes – listen carefully because you will be discussing these with another pair of people

Now, join with another pair so most of us are in groups of four
Describe your partner’s ‘most boring thing’ with the new pair – again have 5 minutes

Hand out index cards
Next, do not agonize – you have 3 minutes

Answer the question - to you, learning styles mean??????

Hand in
This "background knowledge probe” may be useful to use in classes as it engages students immediately, and helps some students especially see that what they already know is important

What are your objectives for this workshop - what do you wish to get out of it?

Please jot down 1 - 3 ideas to hand in – have 3 minutes

[While they are doing that, review the background information they provided to see what you can use throughout the workshop]
Publish the objectives that you have for the workshop

*Let’s compare lists and come to agreement*

Discuss and get a final list

*Questions or comments on the objectives?*

*Incidentally, we are using Kolb’s learning styles theory not as the definitive work on learning styles or personality, but as a teaching-learning tool*

*Stay in your groups of four, but do the next thing individually*

*Everyone, take LSI and fill out the charts*

*Put instructions on up and reiterate*

Think of how you learn outside of a class or workshop

No ties

One number for each answer and a number for every answer

If some seem equally like you, just guess

If none seem like you, again, just guess

Walk around as people are filling out their answers, as some may have questions or issues

While they do that, put a couple of grids up – label them clearly

“How people like to take in information” and “How people like to process information”

Another

Cross diagonally through it "teacher more active" "student more active"

Note: Can have people who finish test and marking their charts early either help a partner or look at some of the charts

*Let’s review the ‘scoring’ on the test and discuss the different learning modes*
Refer to charts you put up

Briefly describe the different learning modes, but not at length

**Next, you have 10 minutes**

*For each of the learning modes, identify 5 - 8 things that happen in typical college classrooms that fit well with each mode*

*See if you can identify a mode that is over utilized, and another that is underutilized*

Call time and take ideas from groups and mention that perhaps everyone will want to take some notes here, as they are ideas that can be used in class – also ask if someone from each group can commit to emailing the entire group with group responses throughout the workshop

*[Your goal here is to help people really understand the learning modes, so comment and correct as appropriate]*

**Next, you have 5 minutes**

*Come up with a short phrase that characterizes each learning mode*

Call time and discuss phrases and see which ones most apt

Discuss implications of what people are saying - are they ‘getting it’?

**Any final questions or issues on learning modes?**

**We’ll move to the Learning Cycle**

*Kolb says that for the most complete learning to occur, you have to move people through the entire learning cycle*

Put up a learning cycle and review what it means

**Why is this important?**
What % of the key things in a lecture do you think most students remember?

If we add activities that students do related to what they are studying, what % of key content do you think most students remember?

If we have students think about how they can apply what they are learning, and connect it to prior learning, what % of the key things do you think most students will remember?

Are we agreed that for most people, the more they think about, process, and use some new learning, the more likely it is that they will understand it?

Questions on this?

AC/CE = how people perceive new information - how you like to learn new things

Sense, feel, intuit, do to think, analyze, review in mind

AE/RO = how people process, or absorb, new information

jump right in to Watch, observe, reflect upon and think about

People learn differently

People develop most the pattern that works best for them (within their own definition of "best"), then use it even when inappropriate

Our task is to move our students through all of them (and ourselves)

Learning does not come naturally all in one area; different learning tasks require different learning strengths. While it may be appropriate sometimes to start the cycle at Concrete Experience, at other times it is best to start with Abstract Conceptualization.

Questions on the learning cycle?
We’ll move to Learning Styles - how we combine our learning mode preferences to build a personal learning style

Make certain that no one is confused about the scoring and plotting

Look at where you ‘scored’ on the grid. Notice the grid on the floor. Please move to your spot!

Ask questions

What does this say about us as a group?

Are we a typical faculty group?

Will this be different if we had all science and math faculty?

Would it perhaps change if we had all business and accounting part-time faculty (that is, people who are working in the field and teach at night)?

If we were students standing here, who might be most frustrated and why?

Students heavily in which learning style might like the idea of standing and discussing learning styles before studying them extensively?

Now think for a moment, will our entering students have a profile similar to what we see here?

We will get to the practical implications of this for us in a bit

Based upon your own learning style profile

What will you most easily see in your students that is positive?

What will you tend to miss in your students?

Let’s go back to the groups we were in

We will look at the implications of all this for our teaching and the types of homework and assessment we do. You have 5 minutes to develop ideas.
Post these questions as well

What learning style(s) do most traditional texts most easily fit with?

What learning style or styles do ‘objective tests’ fit best with?

What type of learning does the physical set up of most classrooms emphasize?

If you have time, see if you can come up with ideas about how to counteract the tendencies you identified.

Discuss results as a full group

Next, each group will make some charts of its own (12 minutes)

Refer to “student more active” vs “teacher more active” chart

What other charts might you create to help explain Kolb’s ideas, or implications?

Call time and ask each group to share one chart they developed

Discuss a way to share charts

Next go to the "Teacher Roles" handout

Review each area

Now, groups have 10 minutes to see if you can add anything else to what is listed on that sheet regarding ‘teacher roles’

Perhaps your team will want to add ideas about how teachers can help students take notes and study from the perspective of each of the four learning styles

Call time and discuss in depth

Questions about learning styles and students?
If it does not come up, mention that often when students learn about their learning style preferences, they try to hide behind the preference when they do not do well on some course project. For example, an Accommodator may say that he/she cannot do term papers well because Accommodators do not do that type of activity. Do not allow students this. Remind faculty that it is their duty to remind students that they have to be able to function in all four quadrants.

*How about looking at how our own learning style probably affects our teaching?*

*Now, alone, answer these questions – you have 0 minutes:*
*What are some key implications of different learning styles for your teaching?*

*Which learning styles are you strongest in using as a teacher?*

*How would you characterize your grading - what learning styles seem to fit best with the way you grade?*

*On the back of that page, identify two things you could do in a particular class to see if this learning style stuff will benefit your students*

Call time

*Now, groups have 12 minutes to share ideas and provide feedback to each other*

*Questions or issues that arose in your group?*

   Discuss as necessary

Depending upon group choose either (1) or (2) below – have 15 – 20 minutes

(1) Design a first class that encompasses the entire learning cycle, including ideas for the course syllabus

or
(2)
Design a class that teaches students about Kolb’s learning styles – including ideas for key handouts

Discuss problems or issues that groups had

Final questions about Kolb or implementing Kolb?

- *It is very useful to teach Kolb to students, so they can monitor themselves*

- *Our goal is to help students be aware of their learning and how they like to learn so they can learn more effectively*

Ask the group what else do you need from us?

Application:
Hand everyone an envelope and ask them to put their own name on it.

Ask them to take a piece of paper and identify three ways they intend to use what they have learned in this workshop over the next month. Tell them that they will be the only people to see this, as when they are done they are to put it in the envelope and seal it. After handing the envelope in, you will hold for a month and then send to them as a reminder.

Follow-Up

Get them to commit to a luncheon or snack-time meeting in 2 – 3 weeks to discuss Kolb

See if can get volunteers to meet to discuss how to expand Kolb efforts, develop ideas for a website, etc

Hand out feedback sheets

- On the back identify the learning modes covered in this workshop
Teacher Roles

In Diverger quadrant

- **motivate** - get people to "buy into" the subject
- create an atmosphere conducive to exploration without evaluation
- help students find their own reasons for proceeding
- look at creative aspects of the subject

Others?

In Assimilator quadrant

- **provide information** (traditional "teaching")
- present data in an organized way
- teach "how we think in this area"
- help students learn to analyze data and form theories

Others?

In Converger quadrant

- help students figure out how to use this new learning
- emphasize **practical** aspects of subject matter
- step back into the role of a coach
- help facilitate learning - not "leading" the learning

Others?

In Accommodator quadrant

- challenge students to **use** what they have learned, experiment with it
- help students evaluate their learning and encourage self-discovery
- push students to **do**
- make sure students understand - provide more help understanding concepts as necessary

Others?
Learning Styles Questions

Do your learning style scores seem valid to you?

   If not, what do you think you are?

What is your greatest strength as a learner?

What is your greatest weakness as a learner?

What makes it difficult for you to learn?

What kind of learning situations help you learn best?

What type of test does a student who is an Accommodator generally prefer?

What type of test does a Converger generally prefer?

What type(s) of student(s) generally prefer a lecture-format class?

What type(s) of student(s) generally prefer a small-group-format class?
What type of paper do Assimilators generally prefer?

What types of assignments do Assimilators generally prefer?

How do Accommodators generally approach theories?

Students with high Concrete Experience scores generally prefer what type of test?

Students with high Abstract Conceptualization scores generally prefer what type of test?

What are the learning strengths of students who generally prefer lecture-format classes?

Students who generally prefer small-group-format classes have what type(s) of learning strengths?

What type of paper does a student with a strong Reflective Observation score generally prefer?

Students with high Active Experimentation scores generally prefer what types of assignments?

Students with high Concrete Experience and Active Experimentation scores generally approach theories in what way?
Learning Styles – Follow-up Activities

This section presents some ideas for material to be sent to faculty members who have participated in a learning styles workshop. It is vital that follow-up activities occur, and occur regularly. The material that follows keys on either the Kolb approach to learning styles or the Fleming (VARK) approach to learning preferences. However, they are designed so that the material can easily be adapted to most of the major approaches.

The purpose of follow-up material is to

1. Remind faculty members to do something with what they have learned,
2. Give faculty members a contact to respond to with questions or concerns,
3. Give faculty members ideas about how to incorporate learning styles/preferences into their classes
4. Provide material to use in a follow-up luncheon or gathering to use as the basis for discussion
5. Maintain faculty members’ interest in learning preferences/styles
Learning Styles – Building Different Strengths

How did I help students build Diverger learning strengths today?

How did I help students build Converger learning strengths today??

What specific activities did I plan to appeal to Accommodator learning strengths?

What did I do today to appeal to Assimilator learning strengths?

How did I remind students to develop skills in all areas today?
Learning Styles – Beginning Class Activities

How did I appeal to students with high “Visual” learning preferences at the beginning of class today?

What might I do to ensure that there is always something in the first 10 minutes of class that appeals to students with high “Visual” learning preferences?

What activities that students did for homework for class today appealed to students with high “Kinesthetic” learning preferences?

What learning preferences did I appeal to through the activities I did in the final ten minutes of class today?

What did I do in class today that reminded students to develop their learning skills in all areas?

Exactly how did I help my students further extend their learning abilities in class today?
Notes for a Follow-Up Meeting

In preparation for our discussion on learning styles next week, please jot down a few notes about each of the following so we can focus our discussions.

As I review my homework assignments, I find that these are the most common types of assignments I give.

These are the learning styles that I believe my assignments appeal to.

These are the learning styles that probably are not addressed through most of my homework assignments.

Some ways I might adjust my homework assignments to address these other learning styles include

A subject I would like to have become the focus of a future meeting is:
Teaching Tips With A Kolb Twist!

Here are a few teaching tips, adjusted with comments about each of Kolb’s four learning styles. They are not offered as definitive comments, but rather as ideas to consider. What can you add to the list? How might we adjust our favorite teaching techniques to accommodate more students – or to help them realize that while they may not like a particular activity it will help them develop learning strengths they do not currently have?

What should I do when students complain about the homework I assign?

- **Think about the type of work you are assigning outside of class.** If you typically focus on one type of assignment, students with one or two learning styles probably find the assignments more comfortable to approach (and complete) while others find them less comfortable and more burdensome. To avoid this, vary the type of assignments.

- For example, if you typically give writing assignments, be sure that some focus on straightforward reporting of content from the reading (for Assimilators), while some allow students to give personal examples (for Accommodators). Divergers might enjoy writing assignments that allow them to interview people about their experiences. Convergers will feel more comfortable with homework assignments that clearly are useful, especially if the link to exam preparation is clear.

- In addition, the information you provide about the assignment will affect how students with different learning styles will perceive the assignment, and its difficulty. While Divergers often like loosely defined and creative assignments, often they may struggle to narrow down choices on their own. Convergers usually like to be given very clear guidelines for assignments and may dislike loosely defined homework. Assimilators may have similar reactions to a lack of clear directions. Finally, Accommodators may find it easier if longer assignments are broken down into smaller parts that are due at intervals.

When a student challenges a fact, turn the situation around by working with the class to determine how to separate facts from opinions in your subject. Be careful not to let this appear punitive; it is actually an opportunity to help your students engage in some critical thinking skills.

- **Convergers and Assimilators are likely to appreciate this approach, as they are most comfortable when dealing with “fact.”** If they get
impatient with the discussion, you might enlist them to find and share evidence of the factual information in question.

✓ Divergers and Accommodators are more likely to focus on the possible ambiguity in the information and are more likely to mix opinion and fact. They will benefit from a discussion of the distinction between fact and opinion, but probably will still want room to discuss their own reactions to the information.

If students come to you complaining about other students, engage them by asking what they think they could do to help out the situation.

✓ This approach may be especially effective with Accommodators. With Divergers, it may be more effective to ask them to take the other person’s perspective.

✓ Sometimes these complaints occur because of a ‘clash’ of learning styles. For example, one student may be irritated by another student repeatedly asking for examples, or offering their own experience during discussions. In-class discussions of learning styles may help alleviate some of these complaints.

Let students have input on assignments by asking them what was “fair” and “unfair” about one-third the way through the course.

✓ This is a good way to accommodate different learning styles. Give relatively equal weight to suggestions that come from different types of learners.

Look at three colleagues’ syllabi each semester to see if they have ideas you can easily incorporate.

✓ Ask a colleague with a different learning style from you to review your syllabus and make suggestions. Since our tendency is to teach in the way we are most comfortable learning, someone with a different learning style may pick up inadvertent bias.
Group Development Workshop

Notes: laptops for each small group are very effective for note-taking in groups and subsequently sharing via email, flip charts and markers, background material on ‘Stages of Group Development’, a room with tables and chairs that can be arranged into groups is effective (although most effective if the room is a typical classroom at the college)

Bridge In

Welcome and Introductions

If people don’t all know each other, do a short icebreaker

Why is it often important to use student groups in class to aid understanding and skills development?

   Present ideas, ask for input

Of course, the problem is that not all groups work effectively. We need to weigh the odds in favor of student groups being effective for students.

Why is it important for faculty members to know about group development?

1. If we don’t understand that people need time to get to know each other, to become a group, we think that they can move to “do stuff” way too quickly. People who do not know each other will take some time to make personal connections, and need to do that.

2. If we don’t understand that there will be some conflict, within the group, and especially aimed at us, then we will take many things personally that really aren’t aimed at us. People in groups need to do some “storming” to figure out how to relate to each other (and to us!).

3. If we aren’t careful about how the group goes about doing it’s work, we will find that things happen that we do not intend (such as, given a break people take more than the allotted time, or people don’t show up on time in the morning, or people keep discussing things after the allotted time, etc). The “norms” of the group drastically affect how it gets things done.

Objectives
Post and discuss

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

**describe the typical five stages of group development**

**identify two typical behaviors that people engage in, during each phase of group development**

**identify at least two activities that a leader can engage in, to help a group progress to the next stage**

**explain why it is important for teachers to understand stages of group development**

**explain how they will introduce students in a particular class to work in groups**

*Questions or other objectives that you would like to discuss?*

Discuss and revise objectives as appropriate

**Pre-Assessment:**

*How many people have heard of either the “four stages of group development” or the “five stages of group development?”*

Depending upon answers (if none then can skip the rest of these questions)

*Anyone think you can identify one or more of the stages?*

  If someone can identify all stages, see if she/he knows much about them.

*Anyone know any other approach to how groups typically develop and work?*

  If they do, gather information to see how it might tie into the “five stages of group development”. It probably will be “punctuated equilibrium”

**Participatory Learning:**
Our first issue is getting you all into groups of four

Take two minutes and jot notes for yourself about how we might do this

Discuss as a full group, taking different ideas from people – and making sure to tell everyone to jot down ideas so they can use them in class as need be.

Get people into groups of four

Why four? Student groups should start out small, 3 – 4 students, because it makes it easier for the groups to function.

If we are going to use student groups in class, and have them be as productive as possible, we have to study a little about what typically happens when a group gets established. We are in a position to help our student groups function more effectively, if we intervene at the right time as necessary.

The stages of group development that we are going to look at are:
Forming
Storming
Norming
Performing
Adjourning (not always included in ‘stages’)

Let’s look at the first stage – Forming
Briefly and in general terms explain what happens

With your group, take 6 minutes and list the kinds of things that students might engage in during this phase

At the end of time, have a full-group discussion of what might go on in a typical classroom. Make a list and post it

Next – Storming
Briefly and in general terms explain what this means

Again, with your group, take 6 minutes and list the kinds of things that students might engage in during this phase

At the end of time, have a full-group discussion of what might go on in a typical classroom. Make a list and post it
Next – Norming
Briefly and in general terms explain what this means

Again, with your group, take 6 minutes and list the kinds of things that students might engage in during this phase

At the end of time, have a full-group discussion of what might go on in a typical classroom. Make a list and post it

Now, full group discussion (make sure someone taking notes)
Some groups cannot get beyond “Storming” – what general kinds of conditions might exist that might cause a group to get stuck in that phase?

What might an instructor do to move people beyond that stage?

What are some ways we can help groups with creating productive norms?

Next – Performing
Briefly and in general terms explain what this means

Again, with your group, take 6 minutes and list the kinds of things that students might engage in during this phase

At the end of time, have a full-group discussion of what might go on in a typical classroom. Make a list and post it

Full-group question – what kinds of issues have developed in well-performing groups or committees you have been part of? Can we anticipate some of the issues student groups will have – lets make a list?

After the list is built
Now, what can we do to help students through some of these issues?

If using the ‘5 stage model’
Next – Adjourning
Briefly and in general terms explain what this means

Again, with your group, take 6 minutes and list the kinds of things that students might engage in during this phase
At the end of time, have a full-group discussion of what might go on in a typical classroom. Make a list and post it.

Comment:

*These stages are not fixed and immobile. Groups can regress, particularly when they do not fully process an earlier stage.*

Questions, issues, concerns?

Activities:

With your group

*Design 2 activities that will move people between stages. For example, what could an instructor do to get people to "Form" as a group, then to move beyond "forming" to "storming"*

One group start with how to get a group to form and move forward through the stages. Next group start with how to get a group to adjourn and move backwards, but again skip performing. Keep alternating.

Whatever you do, write clearly and darkly so we can copy for everyone, as this will become part of your toolkit!

Time limit is 10 minutes

Discuss as a full group

With your group, take 5 minutes and identify questions and issues you have about using student groups in class. Make a clear list, and try to prioritize. At the end of this time, we will take one issue per group in order until our time is up. After the workshop is over, we will answer as many questions as we can via email to you all.

At end of 5 minutes ask groups in turn to raise one of their questions or issues and discuss it with the full group.

Take as long as you feel comfortable discussing issues and concerns, but not so long that you lose people mentally.
At the end of this time period ask each group to give you their remaining questions so that they can be answered over the next week or so via email.

**Summary**

*Please take 10 minutes with your group and summarize what you consider to be the most important things covered today. Pretend you are making a clear listing for a colleague who was not able to be present.*

After they have done that

*Now, this might be a good exercise to use in class. Have small groups of students produce a summary every week, or two, pretending it is for someone who could not be there. However, with students likely you will have to produce some summaries so they can learn how to do them. This is a pretty high level thinking skill that you will be teaching.*

*What do we need to cover again?*

*What do you need to help your understanding of how these stages typically develop, or how to recognize them, or how to use them effectively?*

**Post-Assessment:**

With your group, please produce an effective pre-assessment for this workshop and then a post-assessment. You have 15 minutes

At the end of their time,

*What issues do you have with this? What came up that you want to questions?*

After discussion

*Rest of post-assessment is your individual planning. You will have ___ minutes today.*

*Please take one of your courses and identify five different ways you might use student groups during class. Then, be very specific about exactly how you will form student groups in your class and what you will do to try to make them as effective as you can.*

Walk around and help people as requested.
**Adjourn**
Before people leave describe how you will follow-up with their questions, and mention creating an online ‘group’ with them all.

Resources – people, print, Internet, … are available to help them

Workshop evaluation
Typical Stages of Group Development

For each stage, identify what you believe will be three behaviors that a typical person will engage in

Forming

Storming

Norming

Performing

Adjourning
**Typical Stages of Group Development**

For each stage, identify three activities that an instructor can do to help the group move to the next stage:

**Forming**

**Storming**

**Norming**

**Performing**

**Adjourning** (here identify 3 things a leader can do to help the group end on a positive theme)
What Helps - What Hurts

There are some behaviors that people can engage in when working with a team that generally help the team produce the highest quality work they can, and other behaviors that usually hurt efforts to be high performing.

What Helps

✓ Coming prepared, with all homework done and STUDIED
✓ Being a responsible member of the group ALL the time
✓ Listening
✓ Being enthusiastic about the group and the process
✓ Being willing to search for new ideas
✓ Reminding others to look for the “best answer,” not just “an answer”
✓ Helping the team stay focused by talking about the subject
✓ Not engaging in side conversations
✓ Confronting others who are harming the group with their behavior, in a helpful way
✓ Being willing to share leadership roles

What Hurts

✓ Engaging in side conversations
✓ Not taking responsibility for being an equal partner in the group
✓ Pushing to “get done,” no matter what the answer is
✓ Not being fully prepared
✓ Showing off, kidding around
✓ Not being fully prepared for class and expecting others to carry you
✓ Not participating, sulking, daydreaming
✓ Getting off-track, talking about other classes, other activities
✓ Dominating the discussion
✓ Putting others down (usually in a subtle way)
✓ Focusing too much on getting agreement, rather than searching for the best answer
Writing Cases Workshop

Notes:

- Short, mini-cases are an excellent way for faculty members to deeply involve students in a very high level of thinking.
- Note that the cases referred to here are not the extensive, multi-page cases used in graduate schools. These cases are short, written to engage our students in learning and thinking.
- Cases can be used for many different purposes, from developing higher order thinking skills to discussion starters for classes.
- In the literature cases and ‘problem-based learning’ are frequently entwined, but they need not be.
- Getting faculty to write their own cases involves them in thinking deeply about what students are learning in their classes and how students will apply that learning.
- Cases make an excellent pre- and post-test assessment of what students actually learned in a class (or program).
- Working with faculty to help them effectively present cases to students and take students through a critical thinking process to analyze the case involves meta-teaching that few other activities can reach.
- Having faculty write, or adapt, their own cases helps them focus on what their students need at different stages in a course.
- An effective way to introduce faculty members to the value of using cases in class is by having them write their own cases (and, avoids the ‘Not Invented Here’ Syndrome!)
- This workshop really does require a facilitator who has used cases extensively in her/his own classes.
- Materials needed: flip charts, easels, and paper – along with colored markers are needed, along with regular paper and pens. A notebook computer for each participant will be helpful, copy workshop handouts, sample cases and analysis format from facilitator, 2 envelopes per person attending, some index cards.
- If possible, get some ‘instructions to students’ material from faculty members who already use cases – or modify ones included here.
- If possible, get some actual cases that college faculty use right now, or copy ones included here.
- In advance publicity for a ‘writing cases’ workshop emphasize that mini-cases, targeted to an instructor’s own students are the emphasis, not a traditional multi-leveled case that some faculty may have encountered in graduate school.
Useful web sites as of publication:

✓ A good site with some basic information and a few links that are useful
  http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tscbt.html

✓ An excellent site with a lot of information that can easily be adapted to
  a community college environment
  http://tlt.psu.edu/suggestions/cases/

✓ The National Center for Case Study Teaching in the Sciences has a lot
  of information, although it tends to be university oriented, and good
  links. Has quite a few actual case studies.
  http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/projects/cases/case.html

✓ Cornell’s site has a good tip sheet that may be very useful to adapt for
  your website
  http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/tac/toolbox/tips/cases1.html

✓ A very good source for faculty who need to research before jumping,
  this site has an extensive bibliography and some good links to other
  sources
  http://www.stolaf.edu/people/schodt/casebib.htm

✓ Also refer people to ‘Problem-Based Learning’ web sites and sources,
  because many of the problems that faculty develop through this
  approach are, in fact, cases
Cases Workshop

Welcome

After welcome

*What are your experience using cases in classes?*

*Please fill out this card with whatever background information you have on using cases in your courses, or any experience you had with cases as a student. Please take 2 – 3 minutes to explain your background, then hand your card to me please.*

Icebreaker

Design icebreakers to mix people so you can break into groups of 4 or 5, and that will give you some time to review what they wrote on their cards, so you can use the information in the workshop (and afterwards!)

Separate into groups of four or five

Introduction to cases (½ hour for this section)

- What is a case, as we are using it today?
- Why use cases, advantages with community college students
- Cases and program/discipline outcomes
- Cases and critical thinking skills
- Cases and Learning Styles

*Why use cases?*

*With your group, take 8 minutes to identify why cases may be useful*

Share ideas in the full group, add to as necessary
Make sure to include these if not brought up

Transfer of learning - applications

Give students experience working in groups

To improve student writing

As a change of pace for the class

Promote more student involvement in learning

To provide more contact between the instructor and students in a coaching and mentoring relationship

**Challenges instructors face when using student groups & cases**

*What are some of the typical challenges we face whenever students are in groups? Take 8 minutes with your group and see what you come up with*

Share ideas as a full group make sure to cover the following

Should students work alone, or in small groups?

Forming student groups, if using groups

Grading group projects
  All students get the same grade
  Instructor gives individual students a grade
  Give groups a total number of points, then have the group divide up the points to arrive at individual student grades

Physical environment

How to have students report case analyses

Provide a standard format for reports, or allow creativity

If use groups, change the membership of the group or not

If use groups, how handle conflicts within a group
  Based upon power struggles
struggles over dividing up the tasks
age differences
sex-based differences
students who want "right answer" versus
students happy with "an answer"

How many cases can/should you use in a typical course?

Should there be "answers" at all for most cases

Should students have the cases ahead of time to work on?

Should students have to prepare cases as homework?

**Introducing cases**
Most students have not done, so very full discussion is necessary

Have a practice case

Analyze the practice case with the class (whether or not you will do this throughout the semester)

**What should the instructor do while students are working on a case in class?**

Sit with individual students or small groups to provide feedback

Act as a consultant to groups, roaming the room

Stay away from students completely

Rotate among groups in a pre-set pattern

Advantages and disadvantages of each of these approaches?

Take ideas and discuss with the full group
Okay, other issues that you can think of before we start you working on your own cases?

Take issues as they are raised

Before leaving this part of the workshop, see if people wish to share ideas, concerns and questions via email – try to get them to do this so can create an ‘email community’

**Time for some individual work with assistance from partners at times**

Hand out ‘Background Information’ sheet and take them through it, having them fill out their information

> Now, pair up and discuss your responses for 3-4 minutes each. Role of partner is to be constructively, positively, helpful

Any issues that we need to discuss as a full group?

Hand out “Objectives Cases Must Address” sheet and take them through it, having them fill out their information

> Now, pair up and discuss your responses for 3-4 minutes each. Role of partner is to be constructively, positively, helpful

Any issues that we need to discuss as a full group?

Hand out the “Case Context” sheet and take them through it, having them fill it out as you go along

> Now, pair up and discuss your responses for 3-4 minutes each. Role of partner is to be constructively, positively, helpful

You know the process by now, issues or concerns here??
Take them through the “Developing a New Case” and “Additional Comments” sheets and engage in full group discussions as necessary.

After discussion,

[If you have case instruction models to hand out, do so – if you have cases that faculty have written to hand out, do that also. Tell participants that these are merely the ways that these faculty members took this idea and put it into practice with their students, not intending to be anything other than more information for them as they personalize their own material.]

What are the rough spots? What areas do you need more assistance with? Are you feeling prepared enough to start working on a case and instructions for your students?

What more can we do to help each other?

Okay, you know what you are going to do – write a case and instructions for your students

Before doing that, we need you to do two things

1. Fill out the workshop feedback form to help us learn what worked for you

2. Decide when we will get together to compare ideas, share what we have developed, possibly put information up on a web site for us all to view and share

After discussion, remind what the personnel resources are for participants as they work on their cases, how to contact workshop leaders and Teaching/Learning Consultants, etc
Background Information

Course cases will be used in: _________________________________

**Level of course:**
Students normally take this course . . .

___ among their first 20 credits at the college
___ in the middle of their college career (20 - 45 credits)
___ toward the end of their college career (45 + credits)
___ students in class have varying credits

**Type of course:**
Most students in this course are normally . . .

___ majoring in this field
___ taking the course because it is required
___ taking this course to fulfill a distribution requirement
___ taking this course as an elective
___ other student characteristics that are important? Specify

Other relevant information about this course . . .
Objective(s) Cases Must Address

Please place a "1" next to each objective that is essential to you. Place a "2" next to each objective that is important. Interpret the word "essential" very rigorously; you should have only a few (1 - 3) essential objectives for cases. While you may have more "important" objectives, please also use a very tight interpretation of that word.

__ Improve students' ability to work in groups
__ Improve students' ability to manage time and others effectively
__ Improve students' abilities to organize and present information
__ Improve student’s ability to differentiate between facts and inferences
__ Teach students how to separate relevant from irrelevant information
__ Help students understand personal differences
__ Improve students' ability to apply ideas from this course
__ Improve students' understanding of principles from this course
__ Give students practice in applying decision-making "rules"
__ Help students clarify their ethics and values
__ Help students understand differences in ethical and/or moral values
__ Give students practice drawing reasonable inferences from information
__ Help students learn how to synthesize information and concepts
__ Help students learn how to prepare reports
__ Help students learn how to think creatively
__ Help students develop problem solving skills appropriate to this course
___ Improve student’s ability to function as an effective member of a team
___ Give students chances to exert small group leadership
___ Reinforce basic concepts in this field

___ Teach students how to apply material studied in this course

___ Bring together principles and theories studied throughout the program and show students how to use them all

Other objectives you have:
Case Context

Will students work alone, or in small groups (or alone first, and then in small groups to produce a group report)?

Will students do the case at home or in class?

If the case will be done in class, will students read the cases at home before class?

How many students will be in the class doing a case, if the cases are going to be done in class?

For cases done during class, will students form their own groups, or will you (instructor formed groups usually perform better)?

Will students produce a written or oral report?

Will there be a standard format for reporting the case analysis?

How many cases will students work on during the semesters (students need to do more than a few to learn how to work effectively with each other and to improve their case analyses)?

What will the progression of thinking/analysis/answers be between the first and last cases? In other words, how will the level of case difficulty reflect the increasing sophistication of the students?
How will students know that the cases are significant components of the course (% of final grade based upon case analyses, etc.)

How will case grades be determined?

What role are students playing in the case? Who are they in doing their analysis and making recommendations?

What specific outcome(s) do you want for students? List no more than three.

How will you pre-test for student outcomes?

How will you post-test for student outcomes?
Developing a New Case

You can start writing your own case from . . .

- Modifying a case in a book or textbook for your situation (by far the easiest way to start for most people)
- Taking a "real life" happening and putting it into case form
- Making up a situation entirely

NOTE: Many students do like cases based upon something that really happened. Therefore, if you decide to start by modifying an existing case or problem situation, try finding one that really happened.

**CAUTION**: If you use a "real life" situation for a case

  - Change all names
  - Change all job titles, or other identifiers
  - Change sex, personalities, etc. of all participants (reverse roles)
  - Change all organizational identifiers

After finishing the case, tell someone the "real life" situation. Ask the person to read the case and tell you whether she/he could have guessed it was the "real life" situation. If so, you haven't changed enough. Change enough so that no one could tell what the real situation was.
Additional Comments

- A good length is 1 - 3 pages
- Make characters and work situations fit the level of student backgrounds that you have (for example, introductory business courses can profitably write cases involving workers and supervisors, rather than corporate strategic planning)
- Pay close attention to reading level – match it to the level of the course you plan to use the cases in
- Make sure the knowledge students have about the subject is reflected in the case -- different levels of cases for different parts of the course
- Expect to revise a case several times before it fits with your mix of students, your teaching style, the outcomes you wish, and your course
- Use a classroom feedback (classroom assessment) form to gather information on what your students are really learning from the case, and how they feel about it as a learning tool
- Once you have a case that you feel "fits" very well, revise the specifics enough to make a new case that addresses the same basic issues - alternate cases each time you teach the course to reduce the chance of students "sharing" analyses
- Introduce cases early in the course
- Use cases often during the course
- Make sure that cases count toward the final grade
- Make your grading policy for cases very clear
- Expect some conflict between students, if you have them work in small groups on cases. Expect to help students work through the conflict
- Expect some students not to do the case reading, or case analysis, if you have them do it for homework. How will you handle this?
Case Feedback

Please do not put your name on this. I am interested only in your opinions and perspectives as a member of this class. This is not a test or quiz; it is a way for me to check on what you are learning. Please be as direct and honest as you can. Thanks in advance for your help.

The most important thing I learned while doing this case was . . .

To me, the most interesting aspect of doing this case was . . .

One big thing that you (the instructor) could do to improve this case for people like me is . . .

One little thing that you (the instructor) could do to improve the case for people like me is . . .
Case Study Analysis

After reading the case through at least two times, follow this guideline to make your case notes.

1. Identify the **APPARENT PROBLEM**, or APPARENT PROBLEMS (these are symptoms)

2. List the **TEN MOST IMPORTANT FACTS** (not just the ones that agree with your apparent or real problem, the facts that are MOST important)

3. Identify the **REAL PROBLEM** - what caused the symptoms

4. List your **ASSUMPTIONS**

5. List the **REALISTIC OPTIONS** to solve YOUR real problem

6. Carefully explain your **RECOMMENDATION** to solve your REAL PROBLEM
   Support it with a theory or practice we have studied this term

7. Identify and write down the **BIGGEST POTENTIAL PROBLEM** with your recommendation - what is the worst thing that could go wrong

8. List the **IMPLICATIONS** of your recommendation

9. Identify the ways you will **EVALUATE** the success of your recommendations
KOLOSKI WOOD PRODUCTS

Kate Koloski had always been interested in running her own company. She had trouble working for other people, and was bothered by constant inefficiencies in businesses she worked for. While she was in college, her roommate told her about a summer job running the office of a woodworking company in Maine. Kate didn't care much about woodworking, but the prospect of a well-paying job only three miles from the beach was intriguing. Kate decided to take the job.

The M & R Manufacturing Co. convinced Kate of two things. First, that there was a lot of money to be made in woodworking. Second, if M & R could make money, she could. She decided to open her own plant, and spent her junior and senior years in college studying wood products catalogs, reading wood product magazines, and learning how to run a small business.

During the summer after her junior year she worked for M & R again, paying close attention to the way they did business. She also searched for someone who knew a lot about wood, wood tools, and woodworking - and she found him. Lenny was a master craftsman who sometimes did special work for M & R.

After Kate graduated, she raised money from friends and family, moved to Maine, bought some used equipment, and got Lenny to work for her. She also recruited several of her close college friends to join the company.

She began production with Lenny and three college classmates, who worked without pay for several months. As orders began to come in, Kate could pay her four employees just enough to get by. The building was cold in the winter and hot in the summer. Nevertheless, Kate and her friends were highly motivated and worked 12 to 16 hours a day, six or seven days a week.

Very quickly the hard work paid off. Kate got a major order for special posts from a contractor, and added an assembly line to do the work. Word quickly spread that Koloski Manufacturing did a quality job, on time, and at low prices. Within 18 months Kate increased her staff to 20. She made a determined effort to hire young people, old people, women, minorities, and the disabled. Also, she paid them as well as she could. Kate felt a genuine sense of responsibility to her employees and to the community.

Her employees did good work, but they had no background in either woodworking or manufacturing. To them, wood was wood, wooden posts...
were not much different from wooden columns, and custom oak cabinets were the same as "assembly line pine." Still, Kate, Lenny, and one other person knew quality wood, and the business prospered beyond anything Kate had imagined.

After nine years, Kate had 150 employees working three shifts. As the business grew, she made her most senior employees supervisors. Although some employees felt that going strictly by seniority did not provide the best leadership, the business was doing extremely well.

Kate poured almost all the profits back into the business -- into new equipment, increased employee pay, and a large, modern, air-conditioned factory. She provided health insurance for her employees, bought 12 season tickets to the Red Sox and Celtics that she gave to employees, sponsored several company sports teams, and opened a day care center.

No one worked harder than Kate. She was the first to get to work and the last to leave. She was all over the plant, taking care of every detail, offering advice and suggestions. Everyone knew Kate by sight, and she often stopped to listen to complaints or suggestions.

She decided many grievances on the spot and changed work procedures whenever necessary. Kate prided herself on being a "modern manager." However, not all the supervisors were pleased that employees could take their troubles directly to Kate.

As the tenth year began, Kate was surprised to find that she had falling production, increased employee turnover and absenteeism, and much talk about "going union." Kate didn't mind unions, but she was deeply hurt and puzzled about why her employees would want one.

Kate increased her efforts to be everywhere at once and to be available to everyone. Things got worse. Production dropped even more, several key supervisors quit, and a union began organizing her employees. Kate wondered what was happening to the beautiful idea she had started with.
MicroTek Industries

MicroTek Industries is a manufacturer of microprocessor components for such things as video games and machine tools. The company does not produce final products; rather its products are sold to other manufacturers. Headquarters is in Waltham, Massachusetts, but the two largest plants are located in Miami, Florida and Salem, New Hampshire. While employment in the two plants varies, there are about 200 employees at each location.

Donna Right, new Vice President for Human Resources, received an assignment from the company's President to review the personnel records for the two major plants. She assigned a staff member to compile the data, prepare a report, and brief her. The report showed that, compared to the Salem plant, the Miami plant had:

1. Twice the number of OSHA violations,
2. A much less experienced group of supervisors
3. Many more problems with quality control,
4. Many more components rejected by the purchasing company,
5. Many more employees working less than 40 hour weeks.

After reading the report, Donna decided that it merited some action, and called the two plant managers to headquarters for a meeting. Two weeks later Merry Heffries, Miami's plant manager, and Greg Lomb, Salem's plant manager, arrived at her office. The meeting began...

Right: Merry, Greg, I know that we all want to make MicroTek as profitable as possible. I have been reviewing some employee data I want to share. I'm not interested in criticizing, or pointing fingers. I want to see what we can do to improve our operations. As you know, I think our employees are our most valuable asset, so...

Heffries: Ms. Right, I do respect your position, but I have heard this before. I bet I can even tell you what you plan to say, and probably what information you have. Greg and I have been here before; you people up here at corporate headquarters really don't know what is going on out in the field. Why, if you would spend time working in one of our plants, you would have your eyes opened.

Lomb: Merry, wait a second. Let's see what Donna has to say.

Right: Thanks, Greg. Now, if you will just take a look at this summary of information that my staff put together, perhaps we can get down to work.
Heffries: Look, I know what you are going to do. You are comparing the Miami plant with the Salem plant. It can't be done. Conditions are completely different. First, Greg has access to corporate headquarters and gets lots of things that I can't. Second, the work force in New Hampshire is much better than mine. The people in my area don't have the old fashioned work ethic. The kids only want to work to get some money to go to the beach. Then, I have a bunch of people who barely speak English, and the old people who came down here to escape cold winters. These people are only interested in collecting their paycheck. They don't give a hoot about the quality of the job.

Lomb: Well, Merry may have a point....

Right: Merry, that is a possibility. And, I'm not saying that there aren't different employment conditions. However, we do need to look at the facts. I think if we tie this together, and do an employee survey to see what our workers really think, we can get some movement on these problems.

Heffries: Well, I'm telling you that you are comparing apples and oranges. Corporate headquarters has done surveys before. They all show that the Miami employees just don't want to work hard. They just don't respect management, and nothing we have tried has worked.

Lomb: I have to say....

Right: Well, maybe we could talk about what the problems seem to be. Maybe we can brainstorm some new solutions.

Heffries: I tell you, NOTHING we think of will change these people. They drive my supervisors and me nuts.

After about a half hour of arguing, Donna decided that it wasn't useful arguing with Merry any longer. She was getting nowhere.

Right: Well, Merry, you have made your position clear, and I respect you for that. Perhaps sometime in the future we can explore some ideas about what we might do in Miami.

Heffries: I'm always interested in exploring new ideas. But, I haven't heard any today. You people in corporate headquarters really need to come out into the field to see what we are up against.
Peer Advisors Workshops

Purpose: To create a cadre of faculty to lead a specialized project on campus as workshop leaders, facilitators, coaches, and advocates for integrating this aspect of learning-centered teaching into the basic fabric of teaching on campus.

Notes:

✓ This design includes a half-day beginning workshop, followed by a full-day workshop.
✓ The audience is faculty members who have expressed enthusiasm about whichever topic is the focus of this effort.
✓ Limit participants to no more than 10 per workshop and require attendance at the complete workshop and follow-up activities to become a peer advisor.
✓ Close the workshop to outsiders and ‘drop-ins’ so that the peer advisors can ask any questions they wish to during the workshop. Bind the workshop facilitator(s) to the same confidentiality agreement that covers the peer advisors.
✓ Determine how you will keep participants enthusiastic with follow-up activities (or, depending upon the group, perhaps this is something you will include them in determining).
✓ This workshop design is heavily borrowed from the Instructional Skills Workshop folks.
✓ Get a room that is private, yet a typical room that peer advisors may use to present workshops in.
✓ The room must be large enough for a ‘teaching area’ as well as a ‘discussion area’.
✓ The room must accommodate whatever equipment the peer advisors may need to present their own workshops (which should only be equipment that they will be able to use when presenting on their own).
✓ Flip charts, easels, and writing instruments are necessities.
✓ A notebook computer per participant facilitates note-taking.
✓ Prepare participant manuals for everyone. Use a loose-leaf format that they can add to throughout their participation in the project.
✓ Food helps!
✓ Consider including a ‘resources table’ that includes resources they will have available on campus.
✓ Create the web site, distribution list, etc prior to the workshop.
✓ Make charts of the mini-lesson presentation cycle to post.
**Peer Advisors ½ Day Intro Workshop**

Note: Suggested specific workshop leader comments are in italics below

Welcome and introductions – make sure everyone knows each other

If necessary, do a team-building icebreaker exercise

Provide overview of what the college expects of peer advisors, what the benefits are, expectations, etc [NOTE: IF THE CAO CAN DO THIS, THAT IS EXCELLENT. IF SO, AS SOON AS SHE/HE IS DONE, SHE/HE SHOULD LEAVE]

Discuss as necessary

**Workshop Goal**

- Prepare Peer Advisors for [TOPIC]

Either have them select a partner or form pairs to do the workshop together

**What are your objectives?**

*You have 10 minutes to consider what objectives you have for this workshop (both today and the full-day that follows)*

After 10 minutes, ask them to share their ideas, one at a time. Note that 20 minutes has been allocated to determine this.

Agree upon objectives for the workshop (write on flip charts, and ask participants to write down the agreed-upon objectives

**Post flip charts**

Are there other issues that you need to be discussed during our time together?
Write participant issues and concerns on flip charts
Answer them, or label ones that will be dealt with later
Keep flip charts posted
Provide brief overview of this ½ day workshop and the following full day workshop

*Let’s develop the topics we will select from to make presentations. Each pair will select one topic to present a mini-workshop on.*

Put topics on flipcharts or board:
  - Introduction to [TOPIC]
  - Surprise us
  - OTHERS GENERATED BY THE GROUP

**Guidelines for presentations:**
- 10 minutes (we will be rigorous in adhering to this, allowing no more than 20 seconds more than this time in order to keep the workshop on track, and a question period MUST be built into this 10 minutes)
- Select materials to support what you wish to cover within your topic
- Determine how you will present them to the rest of the participants

**Mini-workshop topics presentations cycle**

- 2 minutes to set up
- 10 minute presentation
- 4 minutes discussion about topic, presentation and related issues
- 2 minutes to break down

*Each topic will take 18 minutes*

*So, go ahead and talk with your partner. Select the topic you two wish to present to our group. As soon as you have selected a topic, put your name next to it.*
If there is a topic that more than one pair wishes to present, have the full group decide how to handle it.

The workshop facilitators will now present a ten minute mini-workshop on [SOMETHING APPROPRIATE TO THE TOPIC, NOT ANYTHING THE PARTICIPANTS WILL BE PRESENTING]

We will have 2 minutes to set up, as you will have in the future, so you are free for 2 minutes

Present the mini-workshop

Stop after 10 minutes

Take 4 minutes for discussion – no more

Take 2 minutes for questions – no more

STOP

This is the time you will have to set up, present and take questions. Yes, it is time-compressed. No, you will not be able to present everything. Yes, this is a problem. No, we aren’t going to extend it. Yes, you can determine what the most important things are that you want to present in your 10 minutes. Yes, we like you but we will stop you after 10 minutes and give you 20 seconds more to wrap it up, then we will stop you. Yes, we will give everyone two minutes for questions after that and then gently but firmly stop everything. If we do not do this, the workshop will continue until midnight!

Questions/issues/concerns?

Hand out package of exiting materials on the subject to each participant.

Go through, reviewing each major section and what it might be useful for

Ideas for additional materials?

After answering, or agreeing to handle in the next workshop, thank them for attending, remind them of date of the next workshop, and that you will be sending out some emails

Take down flip charts with their concerns and issues, and objectives
Peer Advisors Continuation
Full-Day Workshop

Note: get the Chief Academic Officer to lunch to congratulate the participants on becoming peer advisors – and send this information out in an email to participants

Welcome

Are there any questions or issues that have arisen since our introductory session?

Take questions and issues as they arise, or add to the flip charts

Look back at objectives

Are these still appropriate, do we need to revise any?

Nuts and Bolts
Deal with housekeeping details, breaks, lunch, snacks, etc. Remind them of the very minimal structure for the mini-workshop presentations, but reemphasize that you will rigidly hold to the timing

Take one or two of their issues or concerns as may be appropriate

Remind them to watch what others do to get ideas of how they may wish to handle something -- also, ideas about how to work together.

Review

Topics presentations cycle

- 2 minutes to set up
- 10 minute presentation
- 4 minutes feedback and process discussion
- 2 minutes to break down
So – each topic will take 18 minutes

Do three mini-workshops

*** BREAK after 3 ***

Upon return from break take questions or issues on any of the three topics presented that were not dealt with during the presentation, or that have occurred to people since the presentation

Finish mini-workshops

Workshop facilitators present any other topic(s) deemed necessary (note: this is an excellent item to move to a follow-up activity – especially if you can take some time to get topics also from participants. Also, remember that not all topics need to be covered before people become peer advisors. Many topics make good focusing ideas for follow-up sessions with peer advisors.)

If not topics to present, deal with participant issues, review materials to be added to participant manual, review online resources, etc

*** time for lunch! ***

At lunch, make certain that CAO knows he/she has to leave after lunch because the workshop is closed to outsiders

After lunch

Participant concerns or issues

Refer to flip charts and handle another couple of these
Online Resources

If you have created online resource, take them through everything available if not done before lunch

Review any outside online resources you make available to faculty, and add ones that you make available only to peer advisors

If need more online resources, see if two participants will volunteer to search out, review and evaluate, and select more online sources to put up

Campus Resources

Review confidentiality

Clarify the role of peer advisors and confidentiality

Identify ‘advisor to peer advisors’ and confidentiality

Identify any other campus resources or people

Faculty Member Discussions (try to do two – one with a faculty member who is enthusiastic but not knowledgeable, and another with a faculty member who is less enthusiastic and not knowledgeable)

Situation: a faculty member comes in with an issue and needs assistance from a peer advisor (two situations are at end of the workshop)

Ask a willing participant will be the faculty member with a teaching/learning problem

Facilitator will model being a peer advisor

“Fishbowl” technique where the two will sit and discuss, with the rest of the participants observing what is going on

Tell everyone this is a session to generate discussion and ideas only, not a critique!
Hand out and review a feedback guidelines sheet

   2 minutes to set up

   10 minutes for the session

   10 minutes for follow-up discussion

Set up and conduct the session

To start discussion, remind everyone that this is not a critique or someone’s discussion style, but rather a technique to use to generate ideas, questions, concerns, etc

Deal with any residual issues

Ask if they would like to do more of these in coming weeks, perhaps one case at a time with each of them having a chance to be the peer advisor? Do second role-play and process as previously

As we progress through the year, do you think it will be useful to do more of these? Should we contribute ideas and then workshop leaders will develop mini-scenarios to role play?

Potential Problems

Get participants to brainstorm, along with facilitators, about problems that may come up with faculty, or as peer advisors

Brainstorm ideas and list on sheets

Answer all possible on the spot, promise to answer all within two weeks

Confidence Levels

Design a confidence levels feedback form for this workshop, as a group

   Mention that the results will form the basis for future discussions
Follow-up Sessions
Note: highly recommended to get peer advisors to commit to initial projects to keep going, as it will take awhile for faculty to seek them out for ideas and advice on [TOPIC]. Possible topics include

- Developing more online resources
- Developing a self-study guide on [TOPIC]
- Developing a newsletter on [TOPIC]
- Developing a short workshop aimed at part-time faculty
- Coordinating a luncheon on [TOPIC]

Have group brainstorm more topics

Selecting projects for them to engage in right away, the results of which will be shared with faculty, both creates more 'invented here' materials, and gives them informal publicity among the faculty.

Form project pairs, or have them pair up

Select a project to work on, take 20 minutes to do some initial thinking about it to provide rough draft ideas to discuss with all of us

Divide topics up

After 20 minutes

Each group has 5 minutes to present ideas and have a brief discussion period with all of us

5 minutes rigorously enforced! We can always communicate more via email

After all are done

Okay, can we decide a date and time for us to reconvene, say in 3 – 4 weeks to discuss our progress, check out what we are doing, raise issues and concerns, etc?

Get people to commit
Summary

- Role of peer advisors – confidentiality
- “Look for the GOOD” - Feedback guidelines
- Role of advisor to peer advisors – confidentiality
- Resources available
- Email and other communications devices
- Staying in touch with each other
- “Selling” faculty on doing [TOPIC]
- How will follow-up with the group – meetings, etc
Gregarious Greg

Greg is a fairly new faculty member, only in his fifth year, and he is known as a gregarious and out-going person. Open with his students, interested in them, and involved on campus, he is popular. Greg even acted briefly in high school, and is known on campus for his ability to project his enthusiasm and personality in class. However, and there is almost always a ‘however’… Greg went to a very large university where almost all the instruction was via lecture. He is an excellent lecturer, but that is about all he does in class. Lately, some of his students have been saying that while they like him very much, and he is very enthusiastic in class, they aren’t very involved and feel they aren’t learning much. Greg has just walked in to talk about developing more of a teaching repertoire.

Marvelous Meredith

Meredith is known on campus as being an exemplary teacher – or at least that is what she tells everyone. She isn’t actually very popular among the faculty, as she has a large ego and sometimes comes across as being superior. She was an early adopter of PowerPoint, and lets it be known that she uses music and video in her lectures. While she has used student groups in class in the past, you have heard that lately she has been relying upon her PowerPoint, showing students resources on the Internet, and mostly been lecturing. Recently rumor has it that enrollments have started dropping in her classes and that her department chair is pushing her to do more in class. Meredith walks in.
Faculty Classroom Evaluation Workshop

To be successful, ultimately, a learning-centered teaching program needs to change faculty evaluations. No one said that implementing a consistent and far-reaching change would be easy! It is, at best, inconsistent if a college implements a learning-centered teaching process and bases its evaluation of faculty on out-dated models. At worst, faculty will become cynical (more cynical!) and even more resistant to change in the future.

While working with faculty evaluators does not need to be among the first things that you do when implementing a comprehensive program, it needs to occur early in the process. Getting the support of the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) is critical, and that support shows most directly when evaluation processes and procedures are changed. Such an activity sends both a real message to everyone concerned and provides a specific symbol that the college is serious.

Equally important to gaining the CAO support will be gaining support from key department chairs, program coordinators, and the like. Identify who the most influential members are, and spend the time necessary to get their support and encouragement for this activity.

In a union environment, or an environment where there is a strong Faculty Senate, gaining support from key members of those organizations is also crucial. Once more, identify who has influence, and get their support before this workshop occurs.

This workshop is designed to help address key issues, raise concerns, gain some consistency in evaluation, and build a cohort of faculty evaluators with similar knowledge. It is a beginning, because all faculty evaluation procedures include classroom evaluations, not an ending. Other areas of faculty work will also be included in evaluations, and these must be addressed as well. As with all of the workshops in this book, this one is designed as a jumping off point. At the end, get a committed small group to lead the effort to change all aspects to reflect the new paradigm.

It will be most useful to get a respected faculty member, department chair, or division director or dean from another college to be the workshop facilitator.

Assume that sooner or later people will realize that a learning-centered paradigm will change the job descriptions of department chairs, program
coordinators, deans, and the Chief Academic Officer. Is it time to at least begin discussions with the CAO on this?

Notes:

- All publicity for the workshop must emphasize the absolute confidentiality of all discussions and activities within the workshop.
- As with all activities, it is necessary to have a contact person for questions, concerns, and challenges that participants face subsequent to the workshop.
- It is critical to schedule follow-up discussions and activities, again making certain that all are confidential.
- Assume it will be necessary to conduct different types of mini-classes, emphasizing very different types of classes, throughout the year.
- Materials needed include paper and pens for everyone, flip charts, evaluation documents, and evaluation procedures followed by the college.
- It is extremely helpful to be able to video tape the mini-class in order to be able to refer back to it, if necessary.
- Schedule the workshop in a typical classroom, but also one that is private.
- The workshop should be scheduled prior to the beginning of the academic year, or right after the end of the academic year (to take advantage of work during the summer on other aspects of your college’s faculty evaluation process).
- It is handy if the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) participates in the initial portion of the workshop, identifying the purpose of classroom evaluation within the context of a learning-centered teaching program. The CAO can also ‘meet and greet’ and then leave.
- This workshop design assumes that participants have knowledge of learning-centered teaching, but not the implications for evaluations. If participants do not have that knowledge, then more needs to be done to introduce them to learning-centered teaching.
- At the end of the workshop, consider asking participants if they desire to do the mini-lessons and follow-up evaluation sessions more, giving each a chance to participate?
Faculty Classroom Evaluation Workshop

Put general outline of workshop up

**Meet and Greet - Chief Academic Officer**
Introduces workshop facilitator

Purpose of classroom evaluation - CAO

Classroom evaluation cycle at the institution
(CAO leaves)

**Icebreaker to include everyone**

**Background Knowledge Probe**

People take 3 - 4 minutes to write out their experience, level of understanding, and comfort with current classroom evaluation process

If necessary, also include a few minutes where people explain their understanding of ‘learning-centered teaching’

Have participants hand in their material

**Objectives of this workshop**

Ask participants to identify 1 - 3 objectives that they have for the workshop

Build workshop objectives out of the ones developed by participants
Note special concerns, issues for future use

**Best practices in evaluation**

Pair participants up

Ask participants to recall the best evaluation process they ever engaged in, at any time in their lives. What was going on? What were people doing?
What were they doing? How did they feel at the time? How did others feel?

Give each pair 20 minutes to interview each other about ‘best practices’.

Their goal in interviewing their partner is to keep that person talking for 8 minutes.

Take notes on high points, areas of strong emotion, key developments. We will use these interviews to build a ‘best practices’ guide for us all.

Let participants interview each other. Keep gentle time.

**Process results**
- Take one key idea from each pair in turn to build a ‘best practices’ guide
- Note that this is only the beginning, but a very positive one
- Post on newsprint, or put on computer to display

Remind that we are trying to build a ‘best practices’ approach to faculty evaluation – basing it on building a ‘learning-centered college’ in all aspects. This also means that faculty are learners! Basic approach is evaluation that is formative (even in a summative format!)
- Tension between the formative and summative parts!
- Discuss briefly as necessary with the group

**Prior to classroom visitation**

What can we do to help orient faculty members toward learning-centered teaching?

Anything from our ‘best practices’ that we need to incorporate into our standard format?

Special considerations – any?

What is required under college policies and procedures?
**Meeting before class**

Setting instructor at ease, explaining role of evaluation and evaluator
- Their general teaching approach
- Confidentiality of evaluation - instructor, evaluator, DC, Dean
- Things to cover
- Things not to do!

 Anything from our ‘best practices’ to include here?

**Arriving in class**

When should we get to class? Why?

**Physical placement in class**

What are the advantages of sitting in different places in the room?

**Methods of observation**

Briefly describe each
- Scriptwriting
- Timed notation
- Sociogram

How do we use these to note what students are learning? How will we know students are learning?

Get the group to identify strengths and weaknesses of each approach

Consider using only one that you perfect

Remember, a goal is to take notes that allow both evaluator and faculty member to learn!

**Diagram class**

Note number of students
- Add students as they arrive, subtract as they leave

Why might this be important?
Note what instructor does upon entering, time of entering

When to leave class
   Comments to instructor

Writing up classroom observation results and providing to instructor
   Implications of a learning-centered approach?
      Discuss and develop ideas to share, record

   Anything to include from our ‘best practices’

Conducting a learning-centered post-evaluation conference
   Opportunity for discussion
   Conducting a learning-centered approach - what does this mean?
      Discuss and develop ideas which are recorded

Follow-up with instructor
   Measuring success - what is a learning-centered approach?
      Take notes to share in future

   What bring in here from our ‘best practices’

Practice with 10 minute mini-lesson (record lesson if possible)
   Participants have dual role (1) students in the class, and (2) evaluators
      As evaluators, use whatever method of taking notes fits best

   Participants discuss notes they took with small group - identifying issues

   Full group discusses issues raised (refer to recorded lesson if necessary)
      Add points to notes

Practice giving feedback to teachers on classroom evaluation

   Conducting a learning-centered classroom evaluation feedback session

   Get a volunteer (possibly ahead of time) to be the ‘evaluator’ for the teacher
   who presented the mini-lesson. Again, record this session if possible.
‘Evaluator’ and ‘teacher’ sit in one section, participants act as silent observers

12 - 15 minute ‘evaluation session’

**Full group discussion of feedback session**

Lessons?

Challenges? Concerns?

‘Best practices’ connection?

**Wrap up of simulation**

Discuss issues, next steps

Consider asking whether more people wish to act as evaluators to receive feedback

**Additional areas to discuss**

How much emphasis on learning styles?

How much emphasis on active learning techniques?

How much emphasis on gathering student feedback?

How much emphasis on lesson planning?

How much emphasis on instructor/student non-verbal behavior?

Classroom physical arrangements?

Special issues
  - What to do with a ‘bad class’
  - What to do with a possibly dangerous situation

Confidentiality
**Review of Objectives**

Areas to pick up?

**Areas of concern?**

Each participant identifies up to 3 areas of concern for that person. Mark each with a code:

1 = very concerned about this, 2 = somewhat concerned, 3 = somewhat concerned

Hand these in anonymously

**Where do we go from here?**

Areas of concern will form the basis for next steps

Need a small group to assist with planning - volunteers

When will group next get together (not more than 3 weeks)

**Resources to help Evaluators**

Identify resource person (or people) for evaluators to contact, confidentially, for advice, assistance and support
Workshop Checklist

Administering an effective workshop is not simple. Administrative snafus will intrude into the smooth operation of a workshop. Putting on a workshop is complex. However, the tasks facing us when we produce a workshop are predictable. The checklist that follows is intentionally long. It probably includes items that you will not use for a particular workshop. Good. Ask yourself if it is something you should be concerned with.

Download the list and save a master copy. Pick a workshop you run and go through the items, adapting ones to your local situation, deleting irrelevant ones, and creating your own list. Save it under the title of that workshop, and print yourself a copy. As you produce the workshop, revise the electronic copy. You will not reinvent that wheel again, although you may need to do others for other types of workshops.

Review the master copy and see if you can add names of people at various points (for instance who in the physical plant administration schedules rooms, or who handles catering). If certain areas require advance notice (for example, perhaps maintenance needs two weeks notice for special room setup, or IT needs ten days for laptops), include that on your master.

Why do this? First, worrying about administration distracts you from more important tasks. Second, practice makes perfect only if you learn from practice, and a list helps you continually improve. Third, a goal is to have such a good list that a student worker can handle a lot of it!

General Points

- Select a color, font and style to use for everything related to the seminar (all publications, mailings, information sheets, etc.). You know what a Pepsi ad is.
- Create ‘letterhead’ with the name of the workshop, the date and location, contact name, telephone and email. This keeps basic information about the workshop in front of all interested people.
- Use the ‘letterhead’ for all correspondence (making sure it is on the color paper you are using for everything if you send hard copy).
- Whenever you are going to send any information about the workshop, first load the letterhead, then create the letter, memo, flyer, report - **everything** goes out with the ‘letterhead information’.
- Put information on your voice mail about the workshop. Even better, see if the college voice mail system can accommodate a special extension for workshop messages. The day before the workshop change your voice mail message to send callers to a person who will
be in their office during the workshop, so callers can get directions and check with someone when they will be late, etc.

- If possible, get information on the workshop up on a web site, for easy access, portability, and visibility. (Get site on ‘letterhead’.)
- If you cannot get workshop information on a website, email a complete file to yourself. No matter where you are, you can access complete workshop information as long as you can access your email.
- As registrations come in, create a master attendees file electronically - with email addresses, and create an email distribution list.
- Send an email reminder to attendees two weeks prior to the event.
- Give a copy of the workshop schedule, location, and directions to anyone who could conceivably be called for information. The day before the workshop, make sure they all still have the information.
- Make certain you have physically accessible rooms and that all staff are fully informed. Check bathrooms and elevators the day of the event. Know how to contact maintenance if there is a problem.
- If there are mobility concerns, put pertinent information in all publicity for the event and make certain that parking, entrance, elevators, etc are working the day of the event.
- For multi-day workshops, get a bulletin board where messages can be posted for people.
- Put all schedules for the event on ‘post-it note’ newsprint. This makes it easy to put up around your location and easy to change.
- Consider a “welcome” sign that also gives some information.
- Create a master ‘evaluation-feedback’ sheet with standard questions for any workshop you run. Leave space to drop in the letterhead you will always create. For any given workshop, simply load your ‘standard’ questions, add anything specific to the particular workshop you are running, and drop this into your letterhead.
- Invite a local college president (or other top official) to present welcoming remarks, and join the group for lunch if possible.
- If having someone provide welcoming remarks, make certain that the person has basic information about the group two weeks in advance. Confirm the time, place, and length of the person’s remarks a week prior to the event and confirm the person’s title, pronunciation of her/his name, and short biographical information at the same time.
- Near registration, place signs indicating where restrooms are located.
- Have a plan for inclement weather. Is there a phone number that participants can call, or a web site they can check? Consider publishing a formal make-up date if bad weather is possible.
- If charging for the workshop, include the appropriate Federal Identification Number on all information about costs. Be clear about charges and how they can be paid, as well as substitutions of people, refund policy, purchase orders, etc.
**Speakers/Workshop Leaders**

For ease in this section, ‘speaker’ is used to indicate someone brought in from outside to speak or lead a workshop.

- After confirming a speaker, get full contact information for that person, and make certain of all institutional policies regarding payment. Make certain to confirm stipends, travel arrangements, and institutional policies regarding reimbursement of expenses. Send all information, forms, and procedures to the individual(s) well in advance, via email if at all possible. Follow with an email or telephone call if necessary.
- Immediately process the paperwork necessary to pay the speaker’s stipend and expenses.
- Make certain to fully explain the purpose of the speech or leader’s role, size of the audience, background of the audience, length of the speech, etc with the speaker.
- Get full information about any equipment needed, and confirm it in writing via email. Be very specific about what equipment and software is needed, and who will run it.
- Get biographical information from speaker to use for introductions and review it well in advance of the workshop. Make several copies.
- Determine well in advance who will introduce every speaker and get that person full information and the introduction (keep a copy).
- Two weeks prior to the event, confirm date, time, place, subject of speech, length of speech, equipment needed for speech, and size of audience with speaker. Also confirm a phone number where the speaker can reach you in the event of sickness, travel delay, etc.
- Confirm that the speaker’s payment will be ready the day of the event.
- If speaker is to be picked up someplace other than the workshop location, make certain that you have full information on what plane or train the person is arriving on.
- Designate someone to “care and feed” each speaker/leader the day of the event, which may include picking the person up.
- Pick up the speaker’s stipend and have it ready to present at the end of the day. Get all reimbursement forms.
Food

- Get the best food you can. Is there a way to tie some special food into the theme of the workshop? Do so.
- Ask registrants for dietary restrictions.
- When registrations come in, immediately create a list of people with dietary restrictions. If unclear, contact the individual right away.
- Confirm via email dietary restrictions with food provider.
- Immediately prior to the workshop, make certain that food provider has taken special dietary needs into account for every meal or social hour. Confirm how food will be marked for those with special needs, and let those persons know directly ahead of time.
- If doing a social hour, include water and non-alcoholic drinks in as accessible a location as the wine and/or beer.
- Be clear about who is cleaning up, and at what time.
- At registration, get the highest quality coffee and teas possible. It creates a quality first impression. If some people have to travel a distance, also provide some good food.
- Be careful where you put the food. It is easy to disrupt the flow of a workshop by placing food in a disruptive location.
- Do not overestimate people’s desires to do business over lunch. Rather than have some business go on during lunch, give less time. Also, some people will leave at lunch. If you have something crucial, push lunch back a half hour and do it before lunch.
- Consider ending the event with a social hour, allowing people to stay and talk who wish to do so, while others can leave.
- Do not expect people to do much after an evening meal or social hour.
- When providing food, breaks, make certain to specifically ask invited speakers their preferences, and any concerns they have.
- Check college regulations arranging for food and beverages.
- For breaks, make certain that there are readily available trash cans.
- Have a clear way to signal the end of the break.

Registration sheet

Use your workshop letterhead as the form for the registration sheet (which is on the color paper that you are using), and make sure registration sheet includes where to send it directly on the sheet. If unable to get an online form to fill in, or at least an electronic document that registrants can fill out and then email, specify that applicants must PRINT EVERYTHING

- Name
- College, college phone and email (for part-time people get business phone and an email address)
- Home phone and email (optional, but important if people will be away from the college prior to the date of the workshop)
- Preferred location for correspondence
- Any information you need to process their application
- Relevant skills or knowledge the individual brings to the workshop
- Dietary preferences or special needs
- Accessibility or other challenges that people may have

Consider an on-line registration form, or at least an electronic version that people can email as an attachment. You can then “cut and paste” relevant information using exactly what they provided themselves!

**Getting people to the correct place for the workshop**
- Use someone not familiar with the location and see where they go, especially to park, given your directions – fix as necessary.
- Get signs (and staff if possible) in all likely parking spots. Again, try to get someone unfamiliar with the surroundings to get from parking locations to the place where registration is. Use them to determine where to place signs printed on the ‘workshop color’.
- Put up more signs than you think necessary.
- Check directions from several places on the on-line maps to make certain that there are not basic flaws in those directions.

**Registration**
- Make certain registration location is **physically accessible**.
- Make sure that registration area is clearly marked.
- Have alphabetical registration list (three copies) - one to check people in, one for back-up and the other because of Murphy’s Law! Date every registration list, on every page, from the first one you create.
- Provide pen and paper, or index cards for notes.
- Hand out folders or something for folks to keep papers in.
- Get name tags that hang on cords around people’s neck (at least 25% more than registrants), or the kind that clip on - many people object to the kind that sticks on, or that you have to poke through clothing.
- Have people write their own name tags (prevents misspellings, and allows people to choose what they wish to be called).
- Confirm email addresses and correct spelling of names.
- Provide copy of registrants list to everyone to facilitate follow-up.

**Taking people’s pictures?**
For a multi-day workshop where not everyone knows each other, consider taking pictures and posting them in a public (to participants) but not terribly obvious spot. This enables staff and participants to quietly check who someone is. Also, photos are useful to post on web pages, send out, provide after the event, include in articles in newsletters, etc.
Take everyone’s picture and have them fill in their name.
- Put newsprint (the kind with ‘Post-It’ glue on back is easy to hang anywhere) up for pictures, and use glue stick to hang pictures.
- Make sure all workshop staff pictures are posted before registration.

**Follow-up - Immediate**

- Have ‘thank you for being on the staff’ letters/emails prepared beforehand. Personalize each one with an introductory paragraph, copies to the person’s President and/or Dean.
- Have ‘thank you for participating’ letters prepared. If the workshop is longer than a day, send copies to the person’s supervisor.
- Have ‘thank you’ notes prepared for any college staff who helped make the workshop a success.
- For every letter going off-campus, have the envelope prepared.

**Early registration tips**

- Confirm registrations via email (for record purposes), with workshop name, starting date, starting and ending times, and location - include directions.
- If you want early registrations, determine a reason why people should register early (a reason why they should want to!)
- Build a data base of attendees as you process their applicants. Keep their paper applications, or a printout of their emailed application.
- Keep track of registrations by college/divisions/locations to check for areas that have not effectively gotten the word out. This makes it simple to target additional marketing.
- If this is one of a continuing series of workshops, check current registrations against past ones and contact those who had come before but are not currently registered.

**Office - Administrative Supplies**

- Newsprint with “post-it note” glue on the back - easy to put up
- Special marking pens just for newsprint, it does not bleed through
- Tripods to place newsprint on for writing
- Lots of name tags
- “Sharpie” style pens for name tags
- A pen or two for everyone, or a sharpened pencil
- Workshop folder or pad of paper
- Piles of index cards – different colors if people will have different tasks
- Masking tape
- Camera
- Glue sticks, both the “permanent kind” and the “post-it glue” kind
Poster board for signs, and regular marking pens for indoor signs
String (you never know!)
Scissors
Overhead projector and screen
Computer projection unit (make certain it works!)
Laptops for participants
Computers for presenter

Final Thoughts
- Consider having candy (wrapped individually) and fruit available at all times in bowls spread around the area where you will be.
- If it is important to you that people stay until the end, do something at the end that most will definitely want to see/experience/get.
- Have several people act as “greeters” when people arrive, to make people feel comfortable as they arrive.
- Use the best seating you can get. Lousy seats create bad impressions.
- Have staff identified in some way. Perhaps everyone has a clip name tag, but workshop staff have ones that hang on prominent lanyards.
- If some people, or all people, need “proof of attendance” print up those beforehand and fill in the person’s name as they register. Give out at that time or at the end of the workshop, as appropriate.
- If not on your campus, check availability and cost of copying.
- If not on your campus, check whether you can bring in computers and audio-visual equipment of your own, free. If you must use the site’s equipment, get costs and a contract up front.
- If not on your campus, get the name and contact information for the person who will handle on-site details such as heating and lighting, food, accessibility, cleanliness issues, etc. Confirm all details with that person three days in advance of the workshop, and arrange to meet prior to the start of the workshop on the day it will be held. Also arrange to meet in mid-day.
Specialized Materials to Foster Learning-Centered Teaching

This section contains a variety of ideas to help you promote learning-centered teaching. There are models of a variety of different approaches to providing supportive material to faculty members. Feel free to adapt what you wish, revise what you must, and discard the rest! In most cases a few actual examples are included to help you get started, and to give faculty members who may be assisting you a bit of breathing room before they have to generate their own ideas.
Involving Senior Faculty Members Through Writing

Getting senior faculty members to contribute to a learning-centered teaching project can be quite a task. One approach is to ask senior faculty to write up a teaching idea that works for them. Emphasize that it does not need to be unique, nor does it need to be researched. This is simply something that works that may help other faculty members out with a particular issue or challenge. Making sure that there is great flexibility in the manner and style of writing encourages faculty members to use their own styles while writing.

Providing a small honorarium for them once their material is complete, and featuring the idea perhaps during a luncheon discussion, helps identify this as important.

There are at least three other benefits of doing this.

♣ ‘Writing to Learn’ works as well with faculty members as it does with students. As faculty members seek to present an idea clearly in writing, they frequently will do additional research, talk with respected colleagues, and work hard to clarify their thinking – great professional development!

♣ The ideas give you material to include on a web site on teaching and learning.

♣ It automatically generates ideas to send out to other faculty.

♣ It automatically gets some faculty members doing meta-thinking about teaching and learning, and this is catching!

What follows are two models for such a writing assignment. These might be useful to get a ‘writing project’ going, and to provide some different models.
Open Note Quizzes

**Problem:** How to ensure that as many students as possible have both read an assignment, and studied it.

**Proposition:** "Open note" quizzes on the reading

A basic idea related to learning is that writing material, preferably in our own words, helps us learn. "Open note" quizzes can help with this.

**The idea:**
Tell students that you will be giving weekly "open note" quizzes on the reading assignments during the semester. For these quizzes they can use any notes they have taken on the reading assignment, but not their books. The quiz will cover only the most important ideas in the reading. Questions will be short answer style, and you will not be very picky about how perfect their answers are. Repeatedly say that this is merely to reinforce the importance of studying material, which includes writing the key concepts in your own words. No trick questions, no picky details. You might also say that each quiz will include one question that says "Explain one other concept you felt was important in the reading for today," and that this question will be graded based on whether they chose a key idea and explained it moderately well.

If this reading was the assignment for my class, I might ask these questions, for example:

1. Define what "open note quizzes" means.
2. Explain why this idea helps students learn.
3. Define the problem that open note quizzes is supposed to address.
4. Explain how the author suggests these quizzes be done.
5. Explain one other idea you felt was important in the reading for today.

I give students no more than 10 minutes to answer the quizzes. I also tell them that I will throw out the bottom two quizzes because anyone can have a bad day.

I also grade quizzes leniently. The purpose is to get them to study the material, and to show them how they can get a reward that they can totally
control. An answer that shows the student has information related to the idea, but has not explained it well still merits full credit (after all, one reason for having an instructor is to explain difficult concepts). I give the classes a "sample quiz" before the real one so they can see that I ask only short answer questions, only questions related to the key concepts in the reading.

I tell students that I recommend taking full, but concise, notes on only what they feel is vital in the reading. I also strongly urge them to call each other to check out both what is important and what their notes might contain. I caution them that 10 pages of notes will not be useful, because they won't have enough time to find all their answers.

This works best if you also spend time showing them how to take notes on the readings, and reinforce this during the first couple of weeks. That way they have a model of how to take notes, which if they follow will result in “100” grades on the weekly open note quizzes, providing effective and quick feedback for them.

**Results:**

My grades went up dramatically in Intro. to Management. The entire middle of the class rose into the high B and A range. After the second quiz, many students obviously called each other regularly. I had far fewer people asking questions that were easily explained in the reading. The questions I was asked in class were often based upon knowledge.

The major benefit seems to have been to somewhat older returning students taking this as their initial class. However, at least five young students who seemed shaky dramatically improved their grades during the semester. I suspect that this technique gave them a structure that they lacked. Except for one person, the weakest students did not benefit.

Because I concentrated on only the most important ideas, and clearly graded leniently because this is supposed to be a way to improve study habits, I detected no less enthusiasm for the subject matter (something that bothers me with more punitive quizzing). Many students reported that it was a real help, one student complained.

I did not detect any effect on the "drop" rate for the class - it remained about as high as it usually is for an entry level course. The quiz grades did give me a chance to talk to some students quicker than I would have ordinarily - but I think this really only benefitted a few of them.
Rating the Teacher Inside You

My idea is a way to help students learn how to study effectively for a course. The idea originally came from colleagues LeRoy Barnes and Randiann Tutu at Middlesex Community College in Connecticut, and has been modified many times. Basically, the concept is that students spend most of their time learning on their own. Thus they have a ‘teacher inside’ them who does most of the ‘instruction.’

The problem is that most students, as we well know, do not have very effective study habits. They need a source of ideas about how to study that is quick and easy to understand. Also, involving them in assessing how they are studying, and then in deciding what they wish to improve is the most effective way of helping them decide to change.

What follows is a self-assessment instrument “Rating the Teacher Inside You”, which I hand out to students three times during the semester. We go over each item to ensure they understand what it means, and then I give it as a homework assignment that counts toward their final grade. I emphasize that they receive full credit for completing the assignment, with careful attention to the improvement items at the end. The particular grades they give themselves are of no importance to me and do not affect their getting full credit on this assignment.

My only comments on these when they are handed in are to help them be clear and direct in what they plan to improve upon. I encourage them to talk with me about their plans, and attempt to get them to monitor themselves closely. I invite everyone to come in to talk to me about their results when I hand them back, and emphasize that one of my roles in the college is to help them learn how to learn effectively.

The reaction from students is very good. Most say that no one has ever provided so many study tips to them, and too many indicate that no one has ever given them study tips. Some come in to talk with me. Most do fairly vague objectives, but this gives me something to write on each (a typical comment is “exactly how will you know you are improving in this area – can you show your work to a colleague weekly to monitor your progress?”).

I also put this up on the course web site and invite students to complete it more often than the three times I assign it during the semester.
Rating the Teacher Inside You

Most of the time, you must be your own teacher. This is sometimes unfortunate, because many of us have poor teachers inside us. This is especially tough in college, because most of the time we are on our own studying at home. Grade yourself as a teacher. The answers will help point to areas where you can tell the "teacher inside you" to get on the ball and help you out!

Please use letter grades for each item below:

1. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to get you to read a chapter through to get an idea what is going on, then to read through and study it, writing questions in the margin.

2. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to identify areas in the reading that you do not understand.

3. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to make you stop after ten minutes of reading and write down a few sentences explaining the main points of what you have read.

4. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to write down, in your own words, the key points in all readings and then to study them until you know what they are.

5. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to review what you thought were key points in the reading with other students to see if they agree.

6. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to go over class notes after class, to see if they make sense.

7. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to combine class notes with reading, either by writing in the book, or by including notes about the book in your class notes.

8. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to talk to the course instructor immediately about material that you find difficult to understand.

9. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to call another student if you have a question about an assignment, or want to check the meaning of something from class or the book.
10. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to anticipate papers and other assignments and to make you start them well before they are due.

11. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to make you plan study time spaced effectively for all your course work.

12. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to make you always do top quality work.

13. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to make you accept responsibility for your own learning.

14. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to prepare you for tests.

15. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to use the instructor’s comments on papers and tests to make sure you don't make the same mistake twice, and to do more of what the instructor wrote positive comments on.

16. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to help you identify your own objectives for the course and work toward them.

17. Grade the teacher inside you on the ability to make you feel good about the learning you have achieved and the grade you have received.

Overall grade you are giving your "Teacher Inside" ______

Now, your "teacher inside" needs to know exactly what to do to improve her/his grade over the next month. Be very specific about exactly what you will do and how you will know you have done it.

1.

2.

3.
Small Pamphlets

If you cannot get faculty members to do extensive writing, consider creating a series of small pamphlets targeted more toward tips and techniques. These may be even more popular with your part-time faculty.

△ Work with your faculty to select topics. It makes less difference what the first topics are than letting people select what to work on.

△ Faculty teams are best for this work. Two to four members per topic provides some divergence of opinion, without much potential for too much discussion. The small group discussions around ‘best practices’ are some of the best professional development possible.

△ Strictly limit both the page count and the number of ideas that can be included to encourage tightly defined and worded descriptions.

△ Physically print them in a professional manner, and put them up on your website. There is nothing like seeming something physical that looks good, with one’s name on it to motivate many to do more.

△ Consider distribution beyond your college, through regional associations perhaps – get your faculty members some recognition.

△ Settle upon a format and overall style (will you include any graphics, and if so, how many), again working with your faculty. There needs to be a consistent ‘look and feel’ to all work produced.

△ Determine what happens when a faculty group indicates that something is done. Who approves it?

Possible topics to suggest starting with:

- First day of class
- Gathering student feedback on content
- Gathering student feedback on teaching
- Dealing with disruptive students
- Using small groups in class
- Methods of evaluating for improvement, not just grading
- Engaging students
- Teaching critical thinking techniques
- Teaching creative thinking techniques
- Teaching in a multicultural world
- Techniques to get students to write, grading results yourself!
Newsletter Model

This section presents a model for an occasional newsletter. The headings and formatting is intentionally minimal so that you can customize with your preferred graphics and materials. Including a picture of a faculty member is an effective way to attract people to read. Also, if you decide to have a program whereby you train some faculty members to be consultants for others, it is a way to introduce them (put the picture on the first page and a brief bio on the back side (bottom if distributing electronically). If you do not have teaching consultants, a picture of a faculty member draws attention. Formatting into a couple of columns also works well. Finally, put the name of your center near the top and contact information at the end!

One consideration when using various word-oriented means of providing ideas about teaching and learning is to keep their identities somewhat distinct. For example, perhaps the email series might concentrate on classroom assessment techniques, while flyers present ideas that require more thinking, and the newsletter concentrates on techniques to get students active in class. Over time, faculty members who receive them regularly will associate one type of teaching/learning idea with a particular delivery method. On the whole, this is beneficial. Therefore, the following samples concentrate on classroom assessment techniques.

Distribute electronically? Physically? What works best for your campus? Note that many marketing professionals prefer physical materials. If you do decide to physically distribute more than one type of teaching/learning publication, different colors helps distinguish them.

Sometimes what you send out will generate questions or concerns among some faculty members. Ask two faculty members to be the contact for different subjects. This can be a very effective way to both involve them in meaningful activity and to keep them personally interested and involved in the topic. You may even wish to have them do their own follow-up with postings, emails and the like.

Do not ignore the professional development benefits of having your faculty develop local material of all sorts. Having faculty members from your college listed as authors generates additional interest and involvement.

Archive material on your web site, not by number or semester. Determine a clear subject for everything sent out and archive with that descriptor. People searching for ideas or information on a particular subject are much more likely to use the archive if it is topic-based, not numeric!
Quick Hits

What is a ‘Quick Hit?’

*Quick Hits* is your publication. Each issue features short, practical teaching techniques, submitted by teachers. All “quick hits” will be based upon an active learning approach, involving students in their own learning.

*Quick Hits* will throw out many ideas and let you choose one or more that fit with who you are as a teacher. “Take what you can and leave the rest”.

This issue we are focusing on people who just sit in class, mostly passive.

What Message?!
People all respond much more than we sometimes think to the physical environment. How are the chairs in your classroom? Is there anything pleasant on the wall? How does your classroom look? Inviting? 1978ish?

Vote With Your Feet
Ask students an opinion question — something without a ‘right-wrong’ answer, but something where people can answer “yes” or “no.” Have everyone stand up and move to one side of the room for “yes,” the other for “no.” *As they stand*, very briefly explain situations where “yes” would be right, and situations where “no” would be right.

Huddle
Even most people who hate football know what a ‘huddle’ is. Put students in groups of 4-5, with people they do not sit near. Ask an opinion question without a right-wrong answer. Arbitrarily assign ‘yes’ and ‘no’ responses to groups. Tell them to huddle with their group and identify 3 good arguments for why their response is accurate. Finish by having 2 groups report their answers, *while staying in their huddle* (helps students who are somewhat shy to speak because they are only looking at their group).

Diagram the Move
Involve students who are visual by having small groups of students draw a diagram explaining a topic from the reading. Bring in newsprint, tape, and multiple colored markers. Twenty minutes should be enough for most subjects. Having each group post their work allows discussion for comparison. Doing this with advance notice 4 - 5 times should be enough for some artistic, but not normally active, students to become group leaders. Review their diagrams, pointing out similarities.
Stop and Pop
After you have discussed a subject for a while, put students into groups of 2-4 people, standing in different parts of the room. Ask each group to identify something funny, weird, or quick that is related to the material. Tell them that the connection can be very loose, and that they can tell a joke, write on the board, or do anything - as long as it fits the criteria of funny, weird, or quick. Define quick as taking under a minute to explain. Ask for 3 groups to present their idea briefly, while everyone stands.

Move It!
Teach an entire class from a different part of the room. If possible, physically change part of the room, so that students see and feel a different environment. Ask students to help you move furniture at the beginning of class, and at the end of class put the furniture back into its original setup so the next class isn’t disrupted!

Chitter-Chatter Buster
By now social groups have evolved in class. Collaborating on learning is good; collaborating on the next social event is not. So, move seats by mixing men and women, older and younger, experienced and new students. Explain the advantages of talking with different people, changing perspectives, and make certain to laugh when you talk about people being riveted to the seats they started the semester in, and you will greatly lessen potential resistance. Do this regularly, and you will lessen the chitter-chatter.

Official Writers
Before covering the reading assignment for the class, have students talk for 5 - 10 minutes to identify what they believe the 5 key points in the reading are. Ask each group to have “Official Writer” put their group’s points up.

Having all write simultaneously saves time. Use what is on the board to identify what is important, identify differences between groups, and help you target your class discussion. If you look carefully, you may be surprised at what students pick out - it will also help you identify holes in their study habits that you may wish to address in class.

A variation involves helping students work with/on each other to assist in study habits. Have them compare notes about what they wrote down, identify where they may have missed a key point that others in their group picked up, and figure out a way to “plug that hole” in the future.

Questions? Ideas?
For more information, or a bit of help implementing? Contact
Quick Hits

Class Plan
We know what we are doing in class, but what are students taking in? Get some quick information that serves multiple purposes. Near the end of a class, ask students to outline the key points from the class. Assure them that this is not a quiz, but rather feedback you can use to help them.

Looking at aggregate responses from the class will identify where you are clear, and possible areas to emphasize more clearly. This also gives you a chance to discuss note-taking with the class. Incidentally, be prepared for some “interesting” outlines!

Having students put their name on their outlines gives you a chance to do some targeted discussions with selected students to assist them in taking full advantage of class periods.

Class Notes
Especially for beginning students, trying to take good notes is a challenge. Toward the end of class periods, give students five key subjects that you have covered. Ask them to write a 2 – 3 sentence explanation (or definition, if that is appropriate). Remind them that this is not a quiz, but that you are going to use this to help them take accurate notes.

There are three ways to use student information. First, you can see topics that are clearly misunderstood by many students, and need to be reinforced. Second, you can identify common study habit problems and use some class time to show how to identify key class topics. Third, you can target individual student study skills.

Key Points in the Reading
Many students can improve their reading and studying skills if they outline what they consider the key ideas from the readings before class. Giving some credit toward their final grade helps them see this as important. Reviewing the results briefly at the beginning of class lets you identify common misconceptions and problems to focus on during class.

Why outline? Textbook include summaries, but not outlines of key points. The ability to outline key points means that students will have studied the reading before class. Additionally, this is a key critical thinking-life skill.
Linking Ideas
For more advanced classes, work on their critical thinking skills by asking them to create a diagram showing how key ideas from a 2 or 3 week period link together.

The first few times, give them the topic headings to get them started. Also be prepared to show them your thinking in creating the linkages that make sense to you. This helps model the thinking that you want them to learn.

Spend time during class helping them see connections, and allowing them to explain their diagrams. The more you have the class do this, the more you can expect them to identify topics themselves. If students are struggling, consider having them work in small groups.

Study Partners
Make it easy for students to work together outside of class by asking everyone to get 2 – 4 study partners. Explain that students can help each other a great deal. Give students some time during class to meet with their study partners the first few weeks. Encourage them to exchange email addresses, and to set up regular times each week to communicate. Having a few early homework assignments that require students to work together gives students a good excuse to get in touch.

Visual Studying
Some students are visual learners. Help them get started by asking them to create “posters” explaining ideas in the reading. Consider having everyone do this, so students see others’ strengths. Have one or two highly visual students describe their pictures.

Is this technique applicable in other areas? Surely. Students can draw a picture that shows them studying, or perhaps a picture of the class at work. Small groups of students can create posters to explain all sorts of topics in the course. Leaving them up in the classroom provides a constant, visual cue to key topics.

Personal Reflection
Making mistakes and failing are part of being a good teacher. It does not mean you are any lesser a person, nor reflect negatively on you, when you make a mistake or fail at trying something new. The mistake is in not trying. What have you tried lately?

Publication
Quick Hits is a publication of
Quick Hits

This issue of “Quick Hits” is not so much a series of quick hits as it is an approach, with a series of ideas on the other side.

Dealing With Student Classroom Behavior
It is important to recognize that most inappropriate student classroom behaviors are not intended to put the instructor on the spot. Also, rarely are students intentionally trying to be rude, or disrespectful of other students, or an instructor. Nevertheless, when it happens, this does not lessen the impact of those behaviors on you and on other students.

There are also gradations of inappropriate behavior, and they call for different types of responses. Some inappropriate behaviors are relatively mild, not extremely intrusive on other students, and can best be handled with a mild response. Many of the suggestions below fit into this category, because that is the category faculty report happening the most.

There are some students who are more difficult to work with, or more resistant, or who - for whatever reason - don’t respond to a very mild approach. There are some suggestions below that apply to those students.

Finally, although rarely mentioned, there are student behaviors that go far beyond what an instructor should tolerate in class. Your single best tool against extremely inappropriate behavior is to talk to your colleagues. Don’t try to solve everything yourself, the collective minds of your colleagues can help sort through the most appropriate response, and act as a sounding board for cases where you even suspect the student is beyond what you can deal with. Too many faculty keep quiet about these situations until the semester is over, and the student’s behavior is even more entrenched (if nothing else, think of the next faculty member who will get the student!) While rare, these situations require outside assistance – you cannot solve every problem, nor should you have to!

That said, there are techniques that can help manage class behavior. Mix and match ideas. Adapt them to your particular teaching style and personality. Try different ideas out so you have a wide repertoire. Watch to see how consistent you are in all phases of your teaching.

On the back of the sheet, mix and match ideas from the teaching tips section of this manual about managing behavior that fit your college’s culture.
Quick Hits

Helping Students Become More Reflective
One way to help people integrate knowledge is by having them write about their experiences. Here is one format that can reinforce learning. Give students these questions and time to reflect and write. Doing this at least three times during the semester helps them build this learning strength, although four or five times is better.

1. Select an experience and describe what went on. Explain what happened, **AND** explain how you felt and what you were thinking about as you went through this experience. What did you do, hear, think, feel, see? What were others doing and saying about how they felt? Please write **only** what was happening **during** the experience. Remember to include both the objective – what went on, and the subjective – how you felt about it.

2. Think about your experience. What does it **mean** to you now?

3. Look at the experience through different sets of eyes. Perhaps talk to others who had the same experience, and ask them what they did, how they felt, and how they feel about it now. Perhaps put yourself into the shoes of someone very different from yourself, and “see” the experience from their perspective.

4. What does this have to do with what we have studied? Connect your experience with a theory (or theories) or principles that we have studied. How does what you have experienced fit with the theory or principles? Did your experience raise any questions in your mind about the theory or principles?

5. Explain how you will use this new knowledge. How will you apply what you have learned? If you have questions or ideas from the previous section, how will you experiment and test them out? Be very detailed and thorough in your action plans. Will you need resources? Will you need help? If so, from whom, and how will you get it?
Using Email Effectively
To Distribute Teaching/Learning Tips

Tips:
✓ One email = one tip.

✓ Limit your tip to one screen. People must read the tip, not ‘save it to study later.’ Save longer topics for a newsletter or flyer.

✓ Find out what email address your part-time instructors REALLY use.

✓ Will your audience primarily be on high-speed connections? If so, you can include more graphics, color, and maybe a little sound. Do so!

✓ Once a week is too much. Once every two - three weeks is better. Send it consistently, on the same day of the week.

✓ Establish a consistent ‘look and feel’ for these. See a marketing instructor at the college for help with this concept if necessary.

✓ If the subject line does not grab their interest, most recipients will delete the email. After the subject line, the first few sentences are the most important. Make them count!

✓ Expect most people not to read or use the tips. Remember the boy and the starfish story. One at a time.

✓ Connect at least some with ‘semester events’ such as before the first class, before the first set of tests, or during the mid-semester blahs.

✓ Your college may have a pattern of sending out emails on certain days, or certain times during the term -- send yours on a different schedule.

✓ After year one, prepare different emails for different audiences. Develop a series for new faculty, another for very seasoned instructors, and a third set for those in the middle. Even better, get a team of faculty members to handle each set.

✓ Occasionally include a web site for more information. Not always.
Subj: Teaching/Learning Tip: How can I show students I care about them as individuals?

Hello,

The Center for Teaching and Learning sends out email teaching/learning tips periodically. We are interested in your ideas also! Have a quick tip to share? Send it to us and we will include it in a future email.

“How can I show students I care about them as individuals?”

1. Shake each one’s hand and introduce yourself as they come in the first day.

2. Provide a bio sheet on yourself and ask students to fill out one on themselves. Even better, ask them to talk with 3-4 other students to decide what information they should include about themselves.

3. Schedule appointments with students during the first month of class, before they could possibly ‘be in trouble,’ just to talk for 15 minutes.

4. During the first class, ask students to form small groups and identify 2-4 questions they would like you to answer by the end of the semester.

For more information, please contact

We are interested in your ideas also! Have a quick tip to share? Send it to us and we will include it in a future email.
Subj: Teaching/Learning Tip – Only a few students are responding

"How can I get more than the typical students to respond in class?

1. Consider changing your questions from ones that a person can answer to ones that need a group response. Give student groups a limited amount of time to come up with an answer. Ask different students to respond for their groups.

2. Use the ‘14 second rule’ – no one can respond for 14 seconds (gives students who need more processing time to think).

3. Ask questions about personal reactions, opinions, or guesses – making it clear that there are not ‘right answers.’

4. Move physically around the room, so you are closer to different students when asking for input.

5. Make certain that your nonverbal behavior is open and inviting.

For more information please contact

We are interested in your ideas also! Have a quick tip to share? Send it to us and we will include it in a future email.
Subj: Teaching/Learning Tip – Students in the back of the room are disengaged

How do I get the students in back to participate actively?

1. Move to the back of the room to teach regularly

2. Every 4 – 5 weeks move students around the room to work with new people

3. Get them in to talk to you about their plans and interests, and use that information in class when asking questions or giving short assignments

4. Ask for input from students in the back more than from the front

5. Check where your eyes go during class. How often are you avoiding the back of the class?

For more information please contact

We are interested in your ideas also! Have a quick tip to share? Send it to us and we will include it in a future email.
Subj: Teaching/Learning Tip – Students aren’t doing the reading for class

"How can I get more students to do the reading for class?"

1. Make certain you are not reinforcing this behavior by covering everything in the reading in class.

2. Have students identify one or two key questions they have with the reading each week and hand their questions in. Use their questions to determine what you cover in class, but make certain to tell them that this does not mean that material not covered will not be on the exam.

3. Give ‘open-note’ quizzes. After teaching students how to take notes on readings, give very simple quizzes where they can use their notes, but not their book. Make them simple to get ‘100’ on, provided the student has notes.

4. Key students to the most important content in what they will read next.

For more information please contact

We are interested in your ideas also! Have a quick tip to share? Send it to us and we will include it in a future email.
Subj: Teaching/Learning Tip – Students are confused about what to do with a cancelled class

“Students get confused when a class is cancelled for some reason. They don’t know what to do for the next class, and then I have to rush. Any ideas?”

Before the course begins, develop an assignment appropriate at any time during the semester. Make it significant, and personally relevant to students. Make it something that will take them some time to do, but which you can review quickly. Put it up on the course website, and hand it out the first class.

Review the alternative assignment, telling students that if class is cancelled for any reason, they are to do the alternative assignment. For the next class that is held, they should bring the alternative assignment and whatever they had prepared for the class that got cancelled.

For the final class period or two of the course (not the final exam), have material that would be nice to cover, but which will not disturb the integrity of the course. Simply tell students to ‘lop off’ that assignment if class is cancelled.

For more information contact

We are interested in your ideas also! Have a quick tip to share? Send it to us and we will include it in a future email.
**Subj: Teaching/Learning Tip – eliminating the mid-course BLAHS**

“How do I get students energized when everyone is dragging?”

The middle of the course is difficult for both faculty and students. The initial blush of the course is gone, there is no end in sight, and many things have not fallen in place yet. So, shake things up a bit.

- Bring in cookies and hand one out for everything ‘good’ that a student does in class – just make certain to get to everyone!
- Have a class ‘test the teacher’ day where students get to make up questions to ask you about the course content. They also get to assign a grade!
- Give the class an incentive. Tell them they can get out a half hour early if everyone participates in class next week.
- Bring music to class and have it playing when students come in.
- Ask the students what they would like to do to liven things up, a bit!

For more information contact

We are interested in your ideas also! Have a quick tip to share? Send it to us and we will include it in a future email.
Subj: Teaching/Learning Tip – Getting students to come back next term

“How do I encourage more students to come back next semester?”

We are the people students have the most contact with in the college. A great many of our students like and respect us, and value our advice, so …

- Talk about logical follow-up courses briefly several times, in class. Particularly if you teach one of the courses, briefly discuss what is covered and how.

- Come to class early and talk with students about courses.

- Make appointments for students to talk with you right before and after class. Keep telling students you want to meet with them.

- Help students plan out courses for each term until they reach their goal – certificate, degree, or set of courses to transfer.

- Mention financial aid early and often. Get cutoff dates from your financial aid office and share them with students. Get students to help each other find appropriate college offices.

For more information contact

We are interested in your ideas also! Have a quick tip to share? Send it to us and we will include it in a future email.
Subj: Teaching/Learning Tip – Ending the course with a bang, not a whimper

“How can I help my students finish a course, walking away with a sense of completion?”

Many times students just walk out of class the last period and it is over. Consider ways of sending them off with a smile and good feeling.

♣ Shake hands and wish them well

♣ Write a personal comment to each student and give it to them in an envelope as they leave

♣ Put students into groups of 3 – 4 to answer several questions: (1) what they liked best about the course, (2) what they felt helped them learn the most, (3) the nicest thing that happened to them in relation to the course

♣ Ask each student to write a letter to future students, telling them how to do well in the course

♣ If you wish, tell them to email you any time with questions, concerns, or for advice.

For more information contact

We are interested in your ideas also! Have a quick tip to share? Send it to us and we will include it in a future email.
Using Multi-Focus Flyers to Present a Series of Ideas

An additional way to reach some faculty members is by sending out flyers, either physically or via an email attachment.

What follows are some model flyers that can be effective when sent out on their own. They are easy to create, and easy to send out. This means that you do not need to be concerned about a ‘time vs. use’ benefit because even if most faculty members do not read them, the few that do will make your time worthwhile.

Customize these with your own logo. Include your own contact information on every one. Consider physically printing on shiny paper stock, always the same color or pattern, as well as electronic distribution. “Brand” your flyers, newsletters, and announcements so people expect certain kinds of things when they see what they are getting, even before they read it.

These topics also can be very effective teasers for a lunch discussion series, and many can form the basis for short workshops on teaching and learning. Several, such as the two based upon Weimer’s work, and the one based upon Angelo’s, can easily become extensive workshops or the focus of a year-long project.

In short, flyers need not be single-use instruments!

Once you get the ball rolling, find some of your really good teachers and convince them to write a flyer of their own. If they say they do not have the time for an extensive one, consider the ‘short flyers’ in the next section! Faculty members are always using writing assignments to help students learn more; now is the time to use that same principle with them!
Engaging Students in Class: How to Begin

You want to get students actively involved in class, but are not sure how. Or, perhaps you have done this somewhat in the past, but would like a little more guidance.

♣ Start small, with student pairs
♣ Consider giving the exercise early in the class, rather than toward the end
♣ Be very clear and specific with what you want them to do, and what their product should be
♣ Give a relatively simple task at first (“identify one question you have on the readings for today”, or “identify two real world applications of what we are studying”, or “what do you believe were the three most important points we covered in the last class” for example)
♣ Consider having pairs write down their response, including their names, to hand in following class discussion
♣ Identify that it is part of their class participation grade for the day, or indicate how it will count toward part of their grade
♣ Give a specific time frame. Get them used to focusing quickly by setting short, but not impossible time frames. Any of the questions above can be done by a pair in 5 – 8 minutes).
♣ Gently announce when there is about 2 minutes left
♣ Expect a little ‘chitter-chatter’ – don’t you do this when you have a chance to talk with a colleague?
♣ Walk around the room so you are available should a pair have a question – this also tends to lessen side chatter
♣ Spend time processing student responses in class, thank them for their ideas, and tell them what to include in their class notes from the discussion

Still have questions? Remember, we are always available for a discussion, or as a sounding board or listening post, or to give you some ideas. Contact us at ...
Engage Students Outside of Class

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) results for 2006-07 presented a widely quoted finding that indicated only 15% of students say they discussed ideas about class, grades or assignments with instructors outside of class often or very often; 47% never had such conversations. NEVER.

A further finding was that very few students talk with course instructors about their academic goals during the crucial first few weeks of the semester. This is the time when, as all experienced community college faculty and staff know, more students drop out than at any other time.

CCSSE results from the first few years clearly indicate that the more students are engaged in their learning and with people at the college, the more likely they are to continue their education. Some findings indicate that this is even more so if the student is Afro-American or Hispanic.

The task, then, is clear. Determine ways to make it easy for students to talk with us outside of class and hard for them not to. How can we do this?

Here are some ideas:

- Create an expectation that every student must see us outside of class within the first four weeks of the semester, for a short 15 or 20 minute ‘interview’,
- Bring a sign-up sheet to class and pass it around,
- Reward students who come in twice during the semester with an extra point or two on their final grade,
- Give an assignment where students have to plan out their course of study leading to a certificate or degree,
- Encourage students to participate in college activities,
- Assist students in setting up study groups
- Make sure students know how to access the course website and how to send you an email – and tell them when you will respond to their emails,
- Use the 10 minutes before class and a few minutes after class to arrive early and leave late so you can talk to interested students informally. Initiate the conversations about courses, degrees, transfer opportunities, financial aid and registering for courses.

What works for you?
Learner-Centered Teaching

Maryellen Weimer, editor of the newsletter, *The Teaching Professor*, has written extensively and cogently about ways to promote student learning. In the book by that name, she presents five key questions that we can use to do both course and class planning. By focusing tightly on exactly what we want students to be doing, these questions help us design intentional courses and class experiences.

1. What is the student learning?
2. How is the student learning?
3. Under what conditions is the student learning?
4. Is the student retaining and using the new learning?
5. How is current learning helping the student learn in the future?

Interested in more information on how to use these questions to guide your course planning? Check out Weimer’s book, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice*. 
“Guiding” Students to Learning

Maryellen Weimer, long-time editor of The Teaching Professor and one of the most persuasive advocates of student-centered teaching, in the October 2000 issue summarized the seven principles she considers cornerstones for faculty who wish to move from ‘sage on the stage’ to ‘guide on the side.’

1. Teachers do fewer learning tasks. How will students learn to solve problems, summarize, ask questions, determine key links between ideas, determine how to apply ideas to their lives, and do the dozens of other crucial learning tasks so crucial if we do it for them?

2. Teachers do less telling. We tell students too much, as opposed to guiding, helping them focus, and organizing learning experiences so students discover more on their own.

3. Teachers do more design work. Consistent with principle #2, rather than tell students everything, we need to spend more time designing learning to challenge students, without overwhelming them.

4. Faculty do more modeling. To build life-long learners, we have to show how we continue to learn. Weimer suggests acting like ‘experienced trekkers’ to show students how to approach new learning.

5. Get students working together. Students learn effectively from and with each other. In addition, students need to develop effective group skills to use in later life. Probably only half-humorously, Weimer wonders if faculty committees would work better if more faculty members had been taught the basics of group dynamics.

6. Faculty work to create climates for learning. No matter where we teach, how do we use the best information we have about conducive learning environments to create spaces where students want to learn?

7. Faculty focus less on grading and do more with feedback. How can we recast some of our graded assignments so they are truly learning experiences? While keeping a focus on necessary grading, how do we use these also to help students improve their ability to assess their own learning?

Weimer expands upon these ideas, and presents many other practical approaches to teaching and learning in her book, Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice from Jossey-Bass.
Letting Students Do More

A key concept that Maryellen Weimer presents in her approach to learner-centered instruction is that far too often faculty members do all the thinking for students. Building independent learners means helping students perfect learning skills on their own. Here are some ideas to consider.

- Summarizing Techniques – have students write a short paragraph covering the key points from class or the readings for the class, or do a ‘one-sentence summary’, or identify the central topic covered in the readings or class, or do a short list of key topics, or produce an advertisement that illustrates the key point, or …
- Questions – teach students how to identify a key question on the reading, or a question they have after class is completed, or to identify a key question they want answered when starting a new topic
- Journals – have students keep a learning log of what they are learning in the class (keep one yourself), have students pick one topic each week to briefly explain, or have students keep a more traditional journal related to course materials
- Learning-reaction papers – have students periodically write a learning-reaction paper where they explain the most important (to them) two or three things they have learned and how this new learning affects their life
- Applications – have students identify two or three applications of what they are learning to their lives right now, before a new topic ask students to think about how it may apply to their lives and give you an index card with their thoughts
- Quizzes – give students a chance to write their own quiz on the readings for a class, or at the end of class to design a quiz covering the key topics
- Teach a Buddy – At the end of a topic, ask students to identify how they would teach it to a friend who had no knowledge of the topic
- Poster – have students in small groups design a poster illustrating key topics
- Problems – after covering a topic, have students identify at least two types of problems that this topic can help solve, alternatively ask students to identify key problems with applying the topic in life
- This Isn’t True – after covering a topic, ask students to think of all the reasons why what they just learned cannot be true

Note: All of these can be done by students alone, but are probably best down with students in pairs or small groups so that they can learn from each other.
Assessment 101

“There is so much to think about when assessing students in my classes. Where do I start?”

Start here.

1. List the course outcomes

2. Identify the relative importance of each

3. Categorize each outcome as affective, knowledge-based, or skills-based

4. Identify how a good teacher might know whether her/his students had achieved each outcome

5. Identify all of the assessment methods you use right now

6. Match assessment methods and outcomes to ensure that all outcomes are being measured, and in relation to their importance

7. Expect that you may have some outcomes, particularly in the affective or skills-based areas, that you do not measure or do not weigh as heavily as you wish to

8. Identify areas where either your assessment techniques are not adequate, or may not exactly measure what you wish

9. Align your assessment techniques to your stated outcomes

One source of additional information is at the FLAG website (Field-Tested Learning Assessment Guide), which does not cover all courses but does provide a wide variety of material and techniques, all contributed by faculty members. Yes, it emphasizes science, math, engineering and technology, but the techniques and concepts explained are widely transferrable. http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/cl1/flag/
“10 Guidelines for Assessing As If Learning Matters Most”

Tom Angelo, AAHE Bulletin, May 199

Tom Angelo writes that our assessment practices need to be carefully crafted to focus on student learning. His ideas provide a useful list to compare our own policies and procedures against. Angelo indicates that focusing on assessment for learning purposes means we want students to do the following:

♣ Engage actively – intellectually and emotionally
♣ Set and maintain realistically high, personally meaningful expectations and goals
♣ Receive, and make use of regular, timely, specific feedback, and learn how to provide feedback to themselves
♣ Invest as much high-quality effort and time as possible in their work
♣ Work regularly and productively with other students
♣ Seek and find connections to real-life applications of their new learning
♣ Understand and value the criteria, standards, and methods by which they are assessed
♣ Become consciously aware of their own values, beliefs, preconceptions, and prior learning – and be willing to change when necessary
♣ Work in ways that both recognize and stretch their present learning styles and preferences and level of development
♣ Work regularly and productively with faculty and academic support staff

How do your practices stand up? Perhaps this is something we should schedule a luncheon to discuss, or even a mini-workshop? If you are interested, please contact ...
What We Say, What We Do, How We Say It

How about ordering these three items in terms of their influence on student learning? Which one is most important? Which is least important?

1. What we say
2. How we say it
3. What we do and how we do it

If you guessed that considerable research indicates that #3 is most important, #2 is second, and #1 is only third in importance, you did wonderfully. This does have implications for what we do with students, since many of us spend the most time on #1. Consider the following:

What we do and how we do it:
- How do you show your enthusiasm for the subject every class?
- If you expect students to write clearly, how clear is your writing? The first thing students will see is your syllabus. How does it read?
- Demonstrate your interest in students by arriving to class early, talking with students, staying after class to talk with students, bringing your appointment book or PDA to class to make appointments, knowing their names and something about them, and sharing some personal information yourself
- If you want students to arrive on time and to stay until the end, do you start on time, engage students throughout class, and end on time?
- How do you show students what you are learning?
- If students have online assignments, how well are they structured? Is your course web site professional, current, and complete? How quickly do you respond to student questions?

How we say it:
- Ask students to give you anonymous feedback on how you speak
- Tape a class and listen to inflection, tone, enthusiasm – now do it again, but put the tape recorder in the back of the class
- Do you use verbal cues to identify key points, or online, how do you identify key points?
- Video a class and observe and listen to how to ask questions, respond to different students, interact with students who are physically in different parts of the room
- For online courses or email, have someone else read your emails and give you feedback about their perceptions
Class 2: The First Five Minutes

Class #2, the first one to deal with course content, sets the tone for the rest of the semester. And, the first five minutes of class 2 set the tone for the rest of that class, making them the most important part of this most important class.

The first five minutes start 10 minutes before class formally begins. Arrive early. Engage the students already there in conversation. Ask them their names.

Start class right on time and welcome everyone back. Ask if there are any new students, and ask them to see you right after class so you can help them. Remind students what to call you and ask them to keep telling you their name in class.

With appointment book or PDA in hand, ask students to make appointments to see you to discuss the course, their plans, and anything else for 15 or 20 minutes each. If you feel comfortable doing so, pass around an appointment sheet with times marked off so that it is easy for them to sign up for time.

Have everyone physically capable of doing so raise their hand and repeat in unison, "I have a question." Use humor to indicate that now they all know how to raise their hand and ask, so you expect them to (repeat this for classes 3 and 4 to drive the point home).

Ask them to chose a partner, hand each pair an index card and ask them to identify four things from the readings: (1) the most important single point, (2) the most confusing single point, (3) the oddest thing, and (4) something that could have been left out of the reading. Ask them to put their names on the cards, assure them these are not for grading. Ask them to share a few ideas and discuss, then to hand the cards in (an easy way to take attendance and get some information about what is going on in their heads).

Remember, what you do and how you do/say it are more important than what you say. If you want them to be engaged in class, you have to give them chances to do that starting right away. Give them tasks to do with other students. If you want them to do the reading before class, what do you do in class to encourage that (and what do you do that discourages them from doing the reading)? Particularly for introductory level courses, you probably need to show them how to take notes from the readings, and identify why it is important. If you want them to ask summarize material or class, show them how to do that. You get the idea.
"Guiding" Students to Learning

Maryellen Weimer, long-time editor of *The Teaching Professor* and one of the most persuasive advocates of student-centered teaching, wrote an article in the October 2000 issue that summarized the seven principles she considers the cornerstones of this approach.

1. Teachers do fewer learning tasks. How will students learn to solve problems, summarize, ask questions, determine key links between ideas, determine how to apply ideas to their lives, and do the dozens of other learning tasks crucial to effective learning if we do it for them?

2. Teachers do less telling. We need to focus on guiding, helping them focus, and organizing learning experiences so students discover more.

3. Do more design work. Consistent with principle #2, rather than tell students everything, we need to spend more time designing learning to challenge students, without overwhelming them.

4. Faculty members do more modeling by showing students how we continue to learn. Weimer challenges us to act like ‘experienced trekkers’ to show students how to approach new learning.

5. Get students working together to learn effectively from and with each other. In addition, students need to develop effective group skills to use in later life. Probably only half-humorously, Weimer wonders if faculty committees would work better if more faculty members had been taught the basics of group dynamics.

6. Faculty work to create climates for learning. Whether in classrooms, online, or some combination, how do we use the best information we have about conducive learning environments to create spaces where students want to learn?

7. Faculty focus less on grading and more on feedback. Can we recast some graded assignments so they are truly learning experiences? While keeping a focus on necessary grading, how do we use these also to help students improve their ability to assess their own learning?

Weimer expands upon these ideas, and presents many other practical approaches to teaching and learning solidly based upon research in her book, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice* from Jossey-Bass.
Bookmarks

Bookmarks? Yes. Bookmarks. Simple little things. Perfect for a quick idea. Very good as an ‘advertising medium’ for your program. No, you cannot do a lot with them. They are not a major component of a learning-centered teaching effort. However, given the speed with which you can design them, they are a very efficient use of resources.

Advantages of including bookmarks as part of an active learning initiative include

1. Because space is so limited, they force concentration on essential issues and points, allowing faculty members to adapt ideas to their own personal teaching preferences (and, isn’t making instruction more personal one of the key ideas?).

2. All faculty members use books, and many use bookmarks - hence your bookmarks will be visible.

3. They are cheap to produce (even if you print on card stock and laminate), and easy to distribute.

4. They are easy to create. Many of the tips at the end of this manual can be adapted easily. Classroom Assessment Techniques can even be included.

5. The reverse side can be used to advertise programs or projects.

6. Once faculty members have seen a few, it is easy to begin involving faculty in professional development by asking them to submit ‘bookmarks’ for others.

What follows are some ideas that can fit on a third of a page, with space for a logo or diagram. Print three to a page on heavy paper or card stock, and cut. Laminate if you have the desire and capacity.

Try a schedule starting with one the week prior to the beginning of classes, and then biweekly after that.
The students in the back of the class never talk, and look disinterested!

Ideas?

Who says it is the ‘back’ of the room?

Learn all the names of everyone in the back. Use their names in examples. Greet them when they enter the class. Remove the ‘back of the room’ mentality.

Every third class make the back of the room the front. Teach from the back.

Only take questions from the back 3 rows.

How can I get my students more involved in the reading?

Assign 5 - 8 students per week to write a significant question on the reading. Have them hand in their questions before class and start covering the material by answering their questions.

Every few weeks have them write a paragraph finishing the thought “This chapter would be perfect if ....”. Use the papers as the basis for small group discussions.

Give them 2 - 3 key questions to answer about each week’s reading. Consider having them write the answers out and ‘grade’ themselves after you have covered material in class.
Sometimes I’m not sure where to pick up material in my next class?

Take 5 minutes at the end of each class to have students write out one question that they still have, anonymously. Take the ones that have the most interest, and answer those questions.

Appoint five different students each week to come up with at least three questions on that week’s class.

At the beginning of class ask two questions about the previous material. Responses will give you an idea what you need to cover again.

Concerned that some students seem disconnected from class?

They may have a learning style that makes them focus most intently when they can see a practical application of what they are studying. Consider giving students the last 5 minutes of class to identify 1 - 3 applications of material that covered that week.

An added benefit is that being able to identify an application of material is a higher-order thinking skill all students need to develop.

An added benefit is you see what students think is most useful - yo!
Short Flyers Add To Your Repertoire

Short flyers are another easy to devise, simple to send out means of providing information to faculty. Use most of the guidelines for emails, but short flyers can be a bit longer. Still, whether you distribute them physically or electronically, they should be brief and focused on one subject. Short flyers are most effective when there is a consistent theme for an entire year. This both establishes a reason for this type of material and differentiates them in faculty eyes.

If distributed physically, one advantage is the reverse side. What a great place for an advertisement for your programs! Or, perhaps it is time to build more of a community on campus. Feature two faculty members per ‘issue’ with a picture and short bio of each.

If you think this might work on your campus, what follows is a potential series for a year. As with everything in this publication, headings are minimal so you can customize with your own information and graphics. These can get your started, as you build your own faculty group to continue the series.

If you decide to send these out, archive them without the information on what the series involves (last paragraph of each sample below) to make them more accessible.
What Are They Learning?

Fall   #1

**Question:** What do students consider most important, most interesting, and most helpful in the course so far? Knowing student responses to these questions can help us, as teachers, emphasize important points more, or consider different types of class activities and assignments. Ask three questions:

1. What is the **most important** thing you have learned in this class so far?
2. What is the **most interesting** new idea/skill you have learned in this class so far?
3. What part of the course have you **liked best** so far?

Suggested process to use with student feedback techniques:
- Clarify in your mind exactly why you want this student input
- Modify/adapt the suggestions above to your class
- Administer the questions, telling students you need their anonymous feedback, that it is not a test or quiz, and that you will use this to adjust your teaching
- Review their results and categorize them
- Determine what you will do based upon student responses
- Review the results and your decisions with the class
- Make the changes, and check with students again

*What Are They Learning?* is an occasional publication providing ideas on teaching and learning. These are presented as ideas for you to consider using, not as prescriptions or requirements! You know best what will work with your students, in your particular classes, with the resources and constraints you have in that particular class. Hopefully you will find some ideas helpful. While we present one approach to illustrate a concept, please feel free to customize them for your students, in your class, with your learning goals and interests. If you try something that works for you, we will love to hear about it!
What Are They Learning?

Fall   #

Question: How confident are students with key concepts/skills that you are teaching? Select 3 – 5 key concepts/skills that you want students to master and ask them to use this guide to tell you how confident they are so far. Clearly display the items and the answer key.

1 = I completely understand this and can teach a new student
2 = I believe I understand this quite well
3 = I am not sure I understand this
4 = I do not believe I understand this very well
5 = I know I do not understand this

Suggested process to use with student feedback techniques:
• Clarify in your mind exactly why you want this student input
• Modify/adapt the suggestions above to your class
• Administer the questions, telling students you need their anonymous feedback, that it is not a test or quiz, and that you will use this to adjust your teaching
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What Are They Learning?

Fall  #

**Question:** *What do students need before the end of the course?* Now is a good time to ask students what they think they need to learn or do before the course ends. If you decide to use this technique, caution students to be very clear and precise as this an open-ended question. Student answers can help hone class activities before finals or final projects.

Before the course ends, I need help understanding
1. 
2. 
3. 

Suggested process to use with student feedback techniques:
- Clarify in your mind exactly why you want this student input
- Modify/adapt the suggestions above to your class
- Administer the questions, telling students you need their anonymous feedback, that it is not a test or quiz, and that you will use this to adjust your teaching
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What Are They Learning?

Winter #

**Question: How confident are students that they can do well in this class?** It helps us focus our teaching if we know what students feel nervous about when entering a course. In administering this, tell students you need to know where they stand in order to plan class activities that bring out their best and help them over areas they are concerned about.

- A real strength I bring to this class is ...
- One big concern I have about doing well in this class is ...
- The most important thing I could learn in this class is ...

Suggested process to use with student feedback techniques:
- Clarify in your mind exactly why you want this student input
- Modify/adapt the suggestions above to your class
- Administer the questions, telling students you need their anonymous feedback, that it is not a test or quiz, and that you will use this to adjust your teaching
- Review their results and categorize them
- Determine what you will do based upon student responses
- Review the results and your decisions with the class
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**What Are They Learning?**

Winter #

**Question:** *How confident are students with themselves as learners?*

Many of us want students to develop their learning skills, and include this as an important part of our courses. Consider asking students to respond to questions such as these, using a confidence scale from 1 = very confident to 5 = not confident at all

- I am learning how to think about how I learn
- I can analyze my learning strengths much better now
- I can analyze my learning weaknesses much better now
- I am learning techniques to maximize my learning strengths
- I am learning techniques to help lessen my learning weaknesses

Suggested process to use with student feedback techniques:

- Clarify in your mind exactly why you want this student input
- Modify/adapt the suggestions above to your class
- Administer the questions, telling students you need their anonymous feedback, that it is not a test or quiz, and that you will use this to adjust your teaching
- Review their results and categorize them
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What Are They Learning?

Winter #

**Question:** Are students more aware of their beliefs and values?

Many of us teach subjects where the affect is very important – we want students to examine their beliefs and values. Now may be the time to ask students how they are doing. Ask them to respond to the following questions on a scale where 1 = totally agree to 5 = totally disagree

In relation to what we have studied

- I understand my beliefs and values much more
- I have been able to examine my beliefs and values
- I understand other people’s beliefs and values more
- I appreciate other people’s beliefs and values more
- I feel more confident talking with people whose values and beliefs are different than mine

Suggested process to use with student feedback techniques:

- Clarify in your mind exactly why you want this student input
- Modify/adapt the suggestions above to your class
- Administer the questions, telling students you need their anonymous feedback, that it is not a test or quiz, and that you will use this to adjust your teaching
- Review their results and categorize them
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What Are They Learning?

Question: What happens to students when they are stumped with something in the course? What do they do? As teachers, we know that there will always be things that confuse students, and many of us feel that part of a collegiate education is to help students learn what to do when that happens. This feedback technique is quite simple. Because the questions are so open-ended, caution students to be very specific.

- When you are working on the course outside of class and something confuses you, what do you do?
- If you have a question about an assignment and cannot reach me, what do you do?
- When you are in class and something confuses you, what do you do?

Suggested process to use with student feedback techniques:
- Clarify in your mind exactly why you want this student input
- Modify/adapt the suggestions above to your class
- Administer the questions, telling students you need their anonymous feedback, that it is not a test or quiz, and that you will use this to adjust your teaching
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What Are They Learning?

Spring  #

**Question:** *Do students feel they are achieving the goals you have set for them in the course?* Now is a good time to ask students if they feel they are on track to achieve your key class goals. Display the course goals and ask students to respond to each one using this key:

1 = I completely understand this and can teach a new student  
2 = I believe I am making good progress on this goal  
3 = I am not sure I am making good progress on this goal  
4 = I do not believe I am making good progress on this goal  
5 = I know I am not making good progress achieving this goal

Suggested process to use with student feedback techniques:

- Clarify in your mind exactly why you want this student input
- Modify/adapt the suggestions above to your class
- Administer the questions, telling students you need their anonymous feedback, that it is not a test or quiz, and that you will use this to adjust your teaching
- Review their results and categorize them
- Determine what you will do based upon student responses
- Review the results and your decisions with the class
- Make the changes, and check with students again

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What Are They Learning?

Spring #

**Question:** Now that the course is nearly over, what do students think were the hardest, most rewarding, and most interesting assignments/activities? While this information will not help students in the present course, it will help future students. When you ask for their help, make sure to remind them that students before them have helped with assignments and activities they benefitted from. Also, it is useful to model for them that every job requires continuous improvement. Ask students to be very specific in their comments.

The most rewarding assignment/activity we did in this course was ...
The most interesting assignment/activity we did in this course was ...
The hardest assignment/activity we did in this course was ...

Suggested process to use with student feedback techniques:
- Clarify in your mind exactly why you want this student input
- Modify/adapt the suggestions above to your class
- Administer the questions, telling students you need their anonymous feedback, that it is not a test or quiz, and that you will use this to adjust your teaching
- Review their results and categorize them
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Sample Plan for Distribution of Newsletters/Flyers, Emails, Bookmarks

Whether you decide to distribute only one type of newsletter or flyer, or email or many, lay out a plan well in advance. What fits best with your faculty, at your institution, and with the rest of the happenings at your college?

Consider having a faculty committee work with you to develop a plan each year. Frame the discussion as one focusing on what is critical for all faculty members at the institution to know and you will generate another significant professional development activity as a side benefit.

Also consider making this discussion on-going. Focusing on what is important each year helps the institution automatically adjust as students and faculty members change. Additionally, adding new topics, revising the approach to older ones, and tweaking still others all provides additional opportunities for faculty members to hone their understanding through writing materials. A side-benefit of changes is that topics that are dropped can be added to the institution’s teaching/learning web site.

One example of a distribution plan is below. The first set is designed to fit with a 15 week term or semester, the second set with a 10 week term/quarter.

15 week term/semester:

- Before classes begin – Reminder to do a Teaching Goals Inventory for all classes
- Week before classes – Welcome back, services of instructional consultants, workshops during term, luncheon dates, etc
  Email flyer such as “What Are They Learning?” on beginning classes
- Week 1 – Newsletter/flyer and email flyer concentrating on setting course tone
- Week 2 – Bookmark
- Week 3 – Email flyer
- Week 4 – Newsletter/flyer
- Week 5 – Workshops, luncheons, other important dates to end of term and a Bookmark
- Week 6 – Email flyer concentrating on student course feedback
• Week 7 – Email flyer
  Note: Please see below for weeks 8, 9, 10 for a quarter-based term
• Week 8 – Newsletter/flyer
• Week 9 – Email flyer concentrating on ‘pick me up’s’ for mid-course blahs
• Week 10 – Bookmark
• Week 11 – Newsletter/flyer concentrating on ending the course
• Week 12 – Email flyer concentrating on next term/reaching course goals
• Week 13 – Email flyer concentrating on student feedback
• Week 14 – Email asking for suggestions for programming or activities for future terms

*Modifications for a 10 week term/quarter*
• Week 8 – Newsletter/flyer concentrating on ending the course
• Week 9 – Email flyer concentrating on next term/reaching course goals
• Week 10 – Suggestions, ideas for programming and future activities