

Workshop Evaluation & Improvement Plan

Unit	Assessment Office
Workshop Title	<i>Designing a Syllabus to Promote Student Learning</i>
Workshop Facilitators	Paul Adams, Monica Stitt-Bergh
Person submitting report	Monica Stitt-Bergh
Date submitted	December 2009

Executive Summary

The Assessment Office offered a workshop entitled *Designing a Syllabus to Promote Student Learning* in November 2009. Eleven people attended and they represented a range of academic disciplines. The intended outcomes for the workshop included the following: participants will be able to design a syllabus that focuses on student learning and identify the sequence of steps to do so. To assess these outcomes, participants self-reported their understanding of how to design a syllabus and also took a quiz.

Seventy percent of the participants reported an increase in their knowledge about syllabus design and fifty percent correctly identified the recommended sequence on the quiz. Because only half could identify the recommended sequence, the participants probably needed more time or opportunity to engage with the sequence of steps.

In future workshops, the facilitators will concentrate on activities and discussion related to the outcomes and remove the additional (albeit interesting) material. In a 75-minute workshop, conciseness is imperative and high-impact activities are essential.

1. State the SLO(s) that was Assessed, Targeted, or Studied

We assessed

- 1) participants' self-reported understanding of how well they could design a syllabus that focuses on student learning, and
- 2) participants ability to identify the recommended sequence of steps to design a syllabus
Recommended sequence of steps = a) identify outcomes, b) determine evidence needed, c) plan learning opportunities, d) draft the syllabus.

2. State the Type(s) of Evidence Gathered

End-of-workshop self-report, quiz, and CTE workshop evaluation form.

3. State How the Evidence was Interpreted, Evaluated, or Analyzed

Monica summarized the responses/results (see appendix) and discussed her analysis with Paul.

4. State How Many Pieces of Evidence Were Collected

Ten out of 11 attendees completed the quiz and answered the self-report questions. Five completed the CTE workshop evaluation form.

5. Summarize the Actual Results

See Appendix. While 70% reported a gain in understanding, only 50% correctly identified the sequence recommended by the workshop facilitators.

6. In addition to the actual results, were there additional conclusions or discoveries?

The results reinforced the importance of focusing on the workshop outcomes during the session. Related information was discussed during the 75-minute workshop. While interesting, that information may have detracted from participants achieving the outcomes, in particular, the knowledge needed to identify the recommended sequence for developing a syllabus.

7. Briefly Describe the Distribution and Discussion of Results

Results were distributed and discussed at an informal staff meeting.

8. Use of Results/Program Modifications

In future workshops, the outcomes will be emphasized, extraneous material removed, and sufficient learning opportunities designed so participants can achieve the intended outcomes. Because the workshops are 75 minutes long, it is important to limit the outcomes and use time wisely for high-impact activities.

9. Reflect on the Assessment Process

The responses to the two opened-ended questions (“most important thing I learned” and “one thing that remains unclear”), are difficult to interpret. Participants either needed more time to formulate complete responses or the questions should have been quicker to answer (e.g., via a multiple choice format).

APPENDIX: RESPONSES/RESULTS

SELF-REPORT & QUIZ

N=10 (11 attended; 91% response rate)

The most important thing I learned in this session is:

Person ID. Response

1. How to design a syllabus with learning outcomes in mind at the beginning.
2. Creative way of teaching through syllabus. Making syllabus checklist, recommended elements.
3. Options to make syllabus more “readable”
4. Structure of the syllabus
5. You expect mostly what we do anyway.
6. The different approaches relate to the course.
7. How to start developing a syllabus. Relating course SLOs to program SLOs. How to engage students in reading syllabus.
8. Techniques for getting students to read/respond. Reinforce things I know I should do to make objectives, assignments, assessments articulated.
9. Ask the students to set their own goals for the course.
10. Syllabus has rhetorical aspect and logical aspect.

One thing that remains unclear is:

Person ID. Response

1. [no response]
2. All things are enlightening.
3. Structure of an “ideal” syllabus.
4. How to put in assignments in syllabus.
5. [no response]
6. [no response]
7. How specific to make course SLOs.
8. Loved hearing about the issues of assessment, takes on video – can you force this?
9. Nothing that I can think of right now!
10. Encourage student engagement.

Change in understanding:

Person ID	My understanding of how to design a syllabus to promote student learning BEFORE this workshop was:	My understanding of how to design a syllabus to promote student learning NOW:	Point change
1	1	3	2
2	4	4	0
3	3	4	1
4	1	3	2
5	4	4	0
6	2	3	1
7	2	3	1
8	3	4	1
9	2	4	2
10	3	3	0

KEY:

- 1 non-existent
- 2 minimal
- 3 moderate
- 4 considerable

Summary of Change in Understanding

Amount of Reported Change	Percentage. Number of People
No change in understanding (same rating "Before" and "Now")	30%. 3 people (all rated "Before" high, "3" or "4")
Some change (1 point increase)	40%. 4 people
A lot of change (2 point increase)	30%. 3 people (all rated "Before" low, "1" or "2")

Write 1, 2, 3, or 4 to indicate the recommended sequence to design a learning-centered syllabus.

Step #	Activity
	Draft the syllabus.
	Identify the desired results for the course. State them as <i>student learning outcomes</i> .
	Plan the learning opportunities/experiences.
	Determine the types of evidence that will show students have/have not achieved the desired results.

Person ID	Response	
1	4,1,2,3	Partially correct
2	3,2,1,4	Incorrect
3	4,1,3,2	Correct
4	4,1,3,2	Correct
5	NA	Incorrect
6	4,1,3,2	Correct
7	4,1,3,2	Correct
8	4,1,3,2	Correct
9	4,3,2,1	Incorrect
10	4,3,1,2	Incorrect

Summary of recommended sequence responses

- 5 correct (50%)
- 1 partially correct (10%)
- 4 incorrect (40%)

CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE EVALUATION FORM

N=5 (11 attended; 45% response rate)

Please rate the following CTE Event (November 3, 2009): “Designing A Syllabus To Promote Student Learning”

	Low		Medium		High		
	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
Presentation:				2	3		
Discussion:				2	3		
Handouts:				1	4		
Overall Usefulness to You:				2	3		

What was most helpful to you?

- Handouts.
- Example and handout.
- Structure.
- Clarity of presentation, addressed and underlying framework for creating a syllabus and gave some great strategies.
- All the information presented.

What would you recommend for future workshops on this topic?

- Syllabus discussion brings up course design issues.
- Have it longer with more time for individual syllabus evaluation.
- Visual design of syllabus.

Where did you hear about this event?

Email	Flyer	Online	Other	N/A
5				