

Student Success and Active Pedagogies at Clayton State University

In 2003, Clayton State University (CSU) launched a five-year faculty development program focused on active pedagogies that promote student success. After reviewing the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) benchmarks and local CSU NSSE results, we administered a faculty needs assessment to: 1) determine the knowledge, interest and implementation levels on five identified active pedagogies, 2) identify preferred training methods, and 3) ascertain desired incentives to encourage faculty participation. Based on the results of the needs assessment, a faculty development program offering training at three different levels on three of the identified pedagogies was implemented as an integral part of the institution's SACS Quality Enhancement Plan. The plan follows a staggered schedule that provides a three-year focus on each active pedagogy:

2003 – 2004	2004 – 2005	2005 – 2006	2006 – 2007	2007 – 2008
Active Learning				
	Collaborative Learning			
		Problem-based Learning		

During the first year of focus on each active pedagogy, an external consultant presents a half-day workshop for our faculty. In fall 2003, Peter Doolittle from Virginia Tech facilitated a faculty workshop on active learning, and Barbara Millis from University of Nevada – Reno conducted a collaborative learning training session in fall 2004. Following the annual workshop, faculty are given an opportunity to apply for a Student Success Faculty Development Grant to conduct a SoTL classroom research project related to the current active pedagogy. Grants are awarded to six faculty who meet bi-weekly for one academic year to discuss active learning strategies, formulate their research designs, and contribute proven strategies to an online, searchable database. In addition, the grant recipients are expected to present or publish their work.

At the beginning of the second year of focus, the grant recipients showcase their SoTL projects to CSU faculty and recruit peers from their respective schools to participate in a year-long discussion focus group. During the monthly focus groups, faculty discuss pre-assigned readings, share personal experiences related to their use of active learning strategies, and maintain integration idea logs. Faculty participating in the focus groups are also expected to complete online journal reflections, participate in peer observations, and submit case applications.

The third year of focus consists of providing online, self-directed training modules for faculty to utilize as a resource in selecting discipline-specific teaching strategies for use in their courses. Faculty who participate in the online training are expected to complete a satisfaction survey and an online journal reflection to help us track utilization of the training materials and implementation of active pedagogies.

Since 85% of the faculty surveyed in the original needs assessment indicated that receiving significant recognition on their annual evaluations would motivate them to participate in the faculty development training, a proposal was presented and passed through Faculty Council stipulating the amount of credit faculty are eligible to receive at each level of participation in the program. The President also provides an annual \$100,000 faculty development fund to cover conference travel and professional growth opportunities for faculty.

To determine the success of the faculty development program, we plan to administer NSSE & FSSE annually; track grade and retention data; tally faculty participation at all levels; and collect qualitative data from faculty journal reflections, peer observations, and satisfaction surveys. In addition, the institution has joined national networking organizations (e.g., Carnegie CASTL program) to communicate and refine our work.

Questions:

- What are the barriers to increasing the use of active pedagogies on your campus?
- Which strategies did CSU employ to overcome these barriers that you might be able to use on your campus?
- What suggestions can you make to CSU for overcoming these barriers?
- How can institutions assess the impact of faculty development programs?
- What kinds of evidence did CSU include in their assessment plan that you might be able to use on your campus?
- What suggestions can you make to CSU for improving their assessment plan?