

**Community College of Philadelphia
Leadership Institute
2006-2007**

Student-Centered Syllabus

Project Team: Michele Claybrook-Lucas & Melissa St. Pierre

Project Overview:

In line with Dr. Gay's vision to evolve the Community College of Philadelphia into a "student-centered" institute, our project goal was to provide faculty with information on components essential to the creation of student-centered syllabi. We believe that a "student-centered" syllabus is an important variable in producing an interactive classroom experience for students.

Summary of research undertaken to complete this task:

For this project, our team researched the "best practices" used by other institutions, specifically regarding the process used to encourage the development of learner-centered syllabi. Additionally, we examined the current trends regarding syllabus design.

Steps taken to complete the project:

1. Internet/library research regarding the subject matter
2. Identification of know "subject-matter" experts
3. Interview internal CCP faculty to gather their thoughts regarding the subject matter
4. Consult with Leadership Institute Group Leaders for coaching and insight
5. Created an interim project overview
6. Gave presentation to LI colleagues, faculty and administration
7. Analyzed presentation feedback and created "next-steps" to include student input and perspective
8. Developed a focus-group questionnaire
9. Solicited feedback from Dawn Sinnott and Matt Shupp regarding the content of information being solicited on the questionnaire
10. Solicited support from the LI Team Leaders and Jenavia Thompson to identify students willing to participate in the focus group.
11. Jenavia Thompson sent a blast email to student ambassadors to solicit focus group participants
12. Dr. Tobia contacted Dr. Waverly Duck to get permission to contact the names of the students used for Professional Development week.
13. The team contacted Dr. Duck to ask permission to use his current Intro to Sociology class as a focus group – permission granted
14. The team conducted a focus group at the Northwestern Regional Center (Dr. Duck's class). The responses were used to fine-tune questions to be used for the Teaching Center presentation.

15. Scheduled date and time for Teaching Center presentation. John Jones sent an email blast inviting faculty to attend
16. The team had a presentation/focus group discuss on April 30, 2007
17. Created content for website to be posted on Faculty page
18. The team will co-author an article regarding “Student-Centered Syllabi” with Tom Ott, to be published in October issue of “Viewpoints.”

Our final project incorporated our findings as a “best practices” workshop, hand-outs, and a web page.

Next Steps:

As indicated above, our team plans to co-author an article on the subject-matter and would like to present a workshop/discuss group during the fall Professional Development Week (preferably after 8/28; MCL will be out of town on 8/27 and 8/28). We will maintain the website with information and a sample of a “student-centered” syllabus which can be easily adapted to accommodate any instructor’s style.

Project Continuity

The webpage will be maintained on the Faculty page. We can also do presentations at new faculty orientation.

Assessment Results

We provided evaluation forms at the end of the mid-point presentations. This feedback was useful in helping us to refine the content and direction of our project. Evaluations were also provided at our April 30 presentation. The feedback received confirmed that we had identified major learning opportunities and created hearty discussion. This feedback also provided suggestions for keeping the discussion of student-center syllabi on-going.

How this project relates to “Building on Strengths of a Diverse Institution”

The student-centered syllabus supports faculty in their quest to make instruction more personal for students. It moves class discussions from a traditional pedagogy to a facilitation of the transmission of knowledge. Through activities, application of current events, and correlation to popular culture, faculty can give students the opportunity to apply theoretical learning in a real and relevant way. The relevancy of content is tailored to each student’s perception of self and their perception of the world. This is the true embodiment of diversity.

Summary: Lessons Learned

MCL: During this project my ability to “actively” listen improved exponentially. I have a habit of partially listening, then extrapolating data to create the end result. With a small team, this is not possible, nor is it appropriate. At all times, I connected with my partner, Melissa. I demonstrated this by keeping an open-mind (seeing the possibility in whatever was identified as an opportunity.), and a shut mouth until my partner completed her thoughts.

I now incorporate this same process in the office. This allows me to see each perspective that is presented with a clear and open mind.

MSP: Being a part of a small project team forced me to stay focused at all times. I tend to have a million thoughts at once and sometimes move from one idea to another. While this is very much who I am, my partner's ability to help me harness my thoughts, allowed me to focus, align and bring my ideas to fruition. I will use this process again and again because it works and demonstrates my ability to be creative and effective.