Pacific Crest is the favored strategic partner of many higher education institutions when it comes to building human and organizational capacity—whether it be in learning, teaching, mentoring, designing instruction, or assessing. Our work in these areas has resulted in the development and articulation of an educational philosophy called Process Education™, which focuses on the development of broad, transferable learning skills.

Implementation of this philosophy means using processes and tools to create new types of environments in which students take center stage and discover how to improve their learning and self-assessment skills within a discipline. This philosophy also supports the current institutional reform movement that calls for a shift in emphasis from an agenda driven by teachers’ desires and designs to one focused on student learning outcomes. It consistently seeks answers to the question, How do students learn most effectively and enduringly? and then works to translate the answer into teaching practice and, ultimately, institutional policy.

To these ends, Pacific Crest offers a variety of Faculty Development Institutes, Custom Publishing Services, and the Faculty Guidebook — the centerpiece of our ongoing commitment to Process Education™.
Student Success

If what we’re doing now isn’t leading to student success, what do we need to change?

Some possibilities include:

Delivery of Content, Context of Performance, Ownership and Control of Learning, Social Dimension of Learning, Expectations, Goal of Learning, Learner/Educator Efficacy, Modeling, Relationship between Educators & Students, Degree of Challenge, Course/Activity Design, Feedback/Reporting

All these dimensions fall into some broad categories:

- The Transformation of Education (Section 1)
- The Learning Environment (Section 2)
- Assessment (Section 3)
- Mentoring (Section 4)
- Making Connections / Setting Boundaries (Section 5)
- Facilitation (Section 6)

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The Transformation of Education

The Transformation of Education (introduction)
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*Group Exploration Activity*: Exploring Educational Transformation

To learn more about the Transformation of Education, we invite you to view the learning object available at:

[www.transformation-of-education.com](http://www.transformation-of-education.com)
Over the past 25 years or so, there have been tremendous sociocultural (economic, political, etc.) forces pushing, arguing, and pleading for change across the entire continuum of education. What has and continues to emerge at a seemingly ever-increasing pace is not an overarching model or even a singular and coherent description of what education should be. There is, however, much common ground where values and ideals are shared across historically disparate disciplines and interests. These shared values have been articulated and advocated by thinkers and practitioners such as Paulo Freire, Lev Vygotski, Maria Montessori, Carl Rogers, Howard Gardner, Daniel Goleman, Jerome Bruner, John Dewey, and Thomas Friedman, among many others. These shared values appear, sometimes only implicitly, in current initiatives such as No Child Left Behind and 21st Century Skills. What these different perspectives all share is a belief in the potential growth in performance of learners if new roles are assumed by teachers and learners with each placing emphasis on processes which differ from those commonly and traditionally used in the past.

The implication of these new roles and directions yields a much-transformed view of educational practices and attitudes. The table which follows captures 14 major aspects of education and shows both historical tendencies in practice and attitudes as well as transformed practices and attitudes.

The transformation of education is really about transforming ourselves — encouraging our own growth as well as our awareness of our growth. This is not an all-or-nothing proposition, nor is it something that can be accomplished quickly. It is a continuous process, this shifting from red to green, this moving and improving.

A final word: For each of us, our society, culture, and education not only largely dictate who we are (how we see and define ourselves), but also underlie some of our most basic assumptions about the world around us. If we are to change our practices in a fundamental way, we must first become aware of many of those assumptions. When we do, we can either leverage them for greater success (however you choose to define it) or begin to step beyond them to achieve that success. This is a tremendous challenge but is also the key to going from unconscious acceptance of “what is” to exploration of “what can be.” As you explore the table (and the learning object available online), reflect on yourself and culture in which you live and work. As yourself, “Where am I?” on the continuum. Consider what pressures you feel and the clarion calls to which you choose to listen.
# The Transformation of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Historical Tendency</strong></th>
<th><strong>Future Direction</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Challenge
The degree to which increasing the level of difficulty is used in order to grow capacity for learning and performing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enabling</th>
<th>Empowering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is concerned for comfort/safety; Accommodates for weakness and/or disability; Offers gratuitous praise; Sets limitations on the basis of cultural bias</td>
<td>Concerned for enduring personal/professional growth; Asks others to do things that exceed their current capabilities; Offers well-founded praise; Believes in unlimited potential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Cognitive Complexity
Degree to which training and doing is elevated to problem solving & research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memorizing</th>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has implicit assumptions; Relies on the static and historical; Believes analysis is the most important thinking skill; Values expediency; “Practice makes perfect,” Limits context to immediate need</td>
<td>Is aware of assumptions (they are explicit); Thinks critically, is innovative and creative; Uses models; Sees value in situations that are dynamic and evolving; Believes synthesis is an important skill, Seeks to support high levels of learning (working expertise, problem solving, research, transference to new context)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Control
Locus of power/authority for the learning situation or experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty-Centered</th>
<th>Learner-Centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has the mindset of an expert; Is concerned with instructional efficiency, Overcompensates for fear/inexperience by controlling, Holds traditional faculty assumptions/perspective; Asks, “Have I covered the syllabus?”; Values dictation over facilitation</td>
<td>Believes learner engagement is critical for learning success; Concerned with instructional effectiveness; Trusts in ability/experience and support; Able to hold student assumptions/perspective; Asks, “Have I helped my students achieve the learning objectives?”; Values facilitation over dictation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Delivery
The means by which information/knowledge is obtained by learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Active Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefers a lecture format and dissemination of knowledge/information; Believes that students/learners are empty vessels or blank slates, and that they should passively and meekly absorb knowledge; ‘Sage on the stage’</td>
<td>Believes that curiosity motivates learning and that discovery is education; the Montessori method; Sees the educator as facilitator or ‘guide on the side’; Believes students should actively learn by doing; Seeks out knowledge/information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Design
Purposeful arrangement of instructional environment, materials and experiences to support learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rigid</th>
<th>Responsive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is a design ‘traditionalist;’ Always uses designs in a specific way; Believes that design is linear and immutable; Supports designs on the basis of historical goals, values, definitions, and identities</td>
<td>Is a design innovator; Uses designs in multiple ways; Believes that design is often non-linear, easily reconfigured, and adaptable; Makes design changes based on shifting needs and context; Values relevance more than consistency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Efficacy
Well-founded belief in capacity to change and to make a difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doubt</th>
<th>Conviction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believes that success depends on others; Often rationalizes, complains, demonizes; Is negative and defeatist; Is unable to internalize success and accurately self-assess</td>
<td>Believes that success is up to ME; Demonstrates self-confidence and willingness to take responsibility; Able to validate (and self-validate) learning and performance; Is able to internalize success and recognition of accomplishments, as well as accurately self-assess</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Feedback
Information about what was observed in a performance or work product

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believes that feedback is most needed by third party; Is judgmental; Uses standards to judge performance; Demonstrates a compliance mindset</td>
<td>Believes that feedback is most useful to the performer; Is interested in improving performance; Uses criteria to analyze performance; Demonstrates an added-value mindset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MEASUREMENT</strong></th>
<th>Process of determining the level of quality surrounding a performance or product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subjective Determination</strong></td>
<td>Trusts personal judgement above formal measurement methods; Believes that statistics always lie; Awkwardly uses even simple measurement tools; Relies on personal preference/taste/predilection; Amenable to accusations of favoritism or preferential treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective Determination</strong></td>
<td>Adept at using both holistic and analytic rubrics; Seeks to eliminate personal bias in data collection, interpretation, and decision-making; Examines outliers for new insights; Thoughtfully connects research questions, measurement methods, and analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>OWNERSHIP</strong></th>
<th>Degree to which the learner accepts responsibility and accountability for achieving learning outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directed</strong></td>
<td>Requires prompting and monitoring by others in order to initiate and persist; Is sensitive to activities having well-defined resource requirements; Believes that resources need to be introduced and integrated in participant instructions; Relies on extrinsic motivation for meeting requirements; Micro-manages (not allowing others to demonstrate ownership); Is passive (refuses to demonstrate ownership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Directed</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates initiative and persistence without prompting; Often moves in unanticipated, but fruitful directions; Believes that resources should be independently identified and accessed; Displays self-monitoring and self-regulation; Has high or increasing level of self awareness; Is intrinsically motivated to learn and a self-grower; Actively engages with others and situations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>RELATIONSHIP</strong></th>
<th>The degree of emotional investment an instructor or mentor has in his or her students or mentees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotionally Distant</strong></td>
<td>Values objectivity; Believes that thinking is more important than feeling (emotions are transient and irrational); Sees learning as a cognitive operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotionally Invested</strong></td>
<td>Able to see current performance in the context of personal situations and backgrounds; Projection of positive feeling towards all learners no matter what their background or past performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SCOPE OF LEARNING</strong></th>
<th>The contexts across which learning occurs and its application is demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situational Understanding</strong></td>
<td>Pursues the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are narrowly contextual; Tends to content-focused or discipline-focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interdisciplinary Understanding</strong></td>
<td>Pursues the growth of knowledge and skills that are applicable across different contexts; Tends to be process-oriented; Is aware of patterns, similarities, commonality, and basic principles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SELF-AWARENESS</strong></th>
<th>The degree to which reflective and self-assessment practices are used by the individual to foster the growth of his or her learning skills across the cognitive, affective, and social domains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Consciousness</strong></td>
<td>“Do what you’re told;” Doesn’t question; Believes learning is a mystery; Demonstrates unawareness of emotional or social ‘rules’; Acts out; Has knee-jerk reactions; Rationalizes behavior, Is task-oriented, blind to self, reactive, selfish, narcissistic, unable/unwilling to work with others, incurious, self-satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Growth</strong></td>
<td>“Learning how to learn;” Steps back from doing; Self-assesses; Questions actions, Explores self, Works on self-development, Is proactive, open to feedback and constructive criticism; Seeks self-knowledge and self-actualization; Demonstrates increased metacognition, self-discipline, self-mentoring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SOCIAL ORIENTATION</strong></th>
<th>The investment, interdependence, and responsibility for learning throughout a community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
<td>Values self-sufficiency and individual responsibility above interdependence and shared accountability; Identifies collaborative groups with bureaucracy (believes that collaboration is inefficient)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td>Values interdependence and shared accountability above individualism; Demonstrates appreciation for cooperation, teamwork, flexibility, and synergy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TRANSPARENCY</strong></th>
<th>Degree to which stakeholders can view individual, team or collective performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private</strong></td>
<td>Fears judgment; Is a perfectionist; Believes that preparation &amp; practice come before any demonstrated performance; Sees outstanding performances as highly controlled and scripted; Has a high affective filter (fear, alienation, isolation, discomfort)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public</strong></td>
<td>Is willing to model desired behaviors; Trust in self and others, Prefers a collaborative or supportive environment; Is willing to innovate and improvise; Has a lowered affective filter (evidences humor, identification, comfort)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visit [www.transformation-of-education.com](http://www.transformation-of-education.com) to learn more!
The future direction of education is the goal of Process Education. The term Process Education was first used in the early 1970’s and referred to the process of educating students rather than the end product of that education. In 1994, Pacific Crest used the idea of Process Education as a launching board to develop a philosophy that encompassed and impacted each of the key dimensions of education as shown the in Transformation of Education table.

Process Education™

Process Education is a performance-based philosophy of education which integrates many different educational theories, processes, and tools in emphasizing the continuous development of learning skills through the use of SII Assessment principles in order to produce learner self-development.

This philosophy can be expressed through eight guiding principles that address the dimensions of education:

**FACULTY PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLES**

- A Process Educator fully accepts responsibility for facilitating student success.
- In a quality learning environment, facilitators of learning (teachers) focus on improving specific learning skills through timely, appropriate, and constructive interventions.
- Mentors use specific methodologies that model the steps or activities they expect students to use in achieving their own learning goals.
- A Process Educator continuously improves upon existing theories, processes, and tools using active classroom observation and research.

**STUDENT PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLES**

- Every learner can learn to learn better, regardless of current level of achievement; one’s potential is not limited by current ability.
- Although everyone requires help with learning at times, the goal is to become a capable, self-sufficient, life-long learner.
- An empowered learner is one who uses learning processes and self-assessment to improve future performance.
- To develop expertise in a discipline, a learner must not only develop a specific knowledge base in that field, but must also acquire generic, life-long learning skills that relate to all disciplines.
The Compass of Higher Education provides a concept map which describes the post-transformation state of education — Process Education in practice. An detailed breakdown of the Compass can be found on the Pacific Crest Learning Objects page: www.pcrest.com/LO

Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

Servant Leadership

Active Learning

Assessment Culture

Learning-Centered

Student Success

e-Learning

Professional Development

Self Development

Collaborating

COLLABORATING

Self-Assessment and Reflective Practice

Produce

Produces

Learner Development

DESIGNING

Facilitates

Institutional Development

Institutional Development

Evaluating

Evaluates

Character Development

MEASURING

Continuous Improvement

Improves

Self-Assessment

Finalizes

Learning Communities

IS AT THE HEART OF

Organizational Effectiveness

IMPROVES

Assessing

LEADING

Community Outreach

Leads

LEARNING

Strategy

Commitment to Excellence

Note that there are more fundamental processes such as “communicating” or “processing information” that underlie many, if not all, of the processes in the outer ring. While these fundamental processes are indeed critical to the larger and higher-level process clusters, to keep this concept map from being overwhelmingly complex, only the process clusters are shown. If you are interested in a deeper examination of the fundamental processes, the Classification of Learning Skills (Faculty Guidebook modules 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 2.3.5, and 2.3.6) provide an excellent place to begin.
Exploring Educational Transformation

**Learning Skills**

identifying assumptions, checking perceptions, being open

**Why?**

Over the last 20 years, there have been many efforts to transform and improve learning, teaching, instructional design, assessment, and other educational processes, across the educational spectrum and at all instructional levels. The Transformation of Education table provides a perspective from which current or traditional practices (including some of the sociocultural and even personal assumptions that encourage those practices) as well as potential future direction of practices may be viewed.

**Learning Objectives**

1. Understand the dimensions of education as portrayed in the table and apply these to your educational experiences.

2. Appreciate the relationship between current tendencies and the need/desire for movement towards a future direction (“shifting education from the red to the green”).

3. Appreciate the common affective responses that accompany the shift from current practices.

4. Begin to uncover and appreciate the assumptions (personal, social, and cultural) that underlie current tendencies and work against change.

**Performance Criteria**

1. Ability to effectively explain the Transformation of Education to a peer.
   - Attribute 1: Components are identified and articulated
   - Attribute 2: Relationships are understood and articulated

2. Embrace the Transformation of Education table as a framework for analyzing student, educator, and/or organizational performance, change, and pushback
   - Attribute 1: Contextual and practical identification of one dimension of education (including the assumptions behind the practice) that is pertinent to student success
   - Attribute 2: Compelling question about the Transformation of Education for further discussion throughout the workshop
   - Attribute 3: Growth and/or transformation potential is outlined
Plan

1. Working within a team, analyze the Transformation of Education table available both online (www.pcrest2.com/transformation) as well as on the preceding pages of your handbook.

2. Answer the Critical Thinking Questions.

3. Produce a discovery, based upon your personal and collective educational experience, that demonstrates some aspect of the table. Teams should be ready to share this with the group in general.

4. Develop an inquiry question you would like other teams or your facilitator to answer.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Select three dimensions and give examples of the current tendency in practice (i.e., what does that practice LOOK like) as well as the future direction.

2. In which three dimensions is change most critical in order to empower students? Why?

3. In which three dimensions is change most critical in order to empower educators? Why?

4. Which five dimensions are currently most important for your challenges in facilitating greater student success? Why? For each of those dimensions, identify at least one assumption which is either encouraging or discouraging transformation in that dimension.
Section 2

Role of Environment in Fostering Success

Considerations for Engaging Students in Quality Learning Environments
Issues Regarding High Quality Learning Environments
Methodology for Creating High Quality Learning Environments
Creating Synergy for Success in the Classroom

Process Education classrooms require a form of partnership between the facilitator and learners in which the facilitator assumes responsibility for the design and management of the process of learning, and the learners commit to actively engaging and assuming ultimate responsibility for their learning. In order to achieve such a shared partnership, it is important to have a solid understanding of what motivates people to learn and how an environment can be created to foster optimal learning.

Pat Cross, the highly respected scholar and prolific author, has offered six principles for teachers to follow in optimizing motivation of students represented in the following table. Likewise, Process Educators have developed a set of principles for a high quality learning environment (HQLE) that address the issue of motivating students and keeping them actively committed and engaged. There are materials elaborating on these principles in Module 2.2.8, “Process Education as a Motivation and Self-Regulation System” in the Faculty Guidebook. Within Module 3.1.1, “Overview of a Quality Learning Environment,” the principles identified by Process Educators for creating an environment for success are offered. The module provides detail with examples that detail ways of realizing these principles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pat Cross Principles of Motivation</th>
<th>Process Education Principles for a High Quality Learning Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expect success.</td>
<td>Establish a high degree of trust and respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make sure both learner and mentor are committed to the learner’s success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create optimal levels of challenges.</td>
<td>Challenge students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set clear and high expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage risk-taking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage feelings of control.</td>
<td>Get student buy-in very early in the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalize on intrinsic motivation.</td>
<td>Seek student feedback regularly by using SII Assessment on a consistent and timely basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give informational feedback.</td>
<td>Measure and document progress and growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalize on social motivation.</td>
<td>Create a collaborative learning space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create a balance between structure and flexibility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Process Education Classroom Requires Change

Most of us will claim that we already engage learners in quality learning environments. To some extent that is likely true. However, much of what we do may have been done intuitively or by trial and error without stepping back to analyze some of our assumptions, our way of being as we interact with learners and expect them to interact with one another, and our ability to design the environment for success. When we engage learners in a Process Education classroom, there are usually multiple beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are different from traditional learning experience. Any time that we invite people into a “different” situation where change is required, we need to help them to navigate that change so that it is a successful experience both for the learners and for us. We also need to hold ourselves to a more rigorous standard if we are to consistently operate on the principles just listed.

Inherent in behavioral change are the phases of unfreezing old behaviors and beliefs, transition, and refreezing. In the transition phase, it is natural for there to be a desire to return to old habits that are familiar and more comfortable, and there is often resistance when new behaviors are not successful when first attempted. During this transition stage there is a great deal of opportunity for problem-solving and refinement when trying to find behaviors that work both for the teacher and the students. The following list some of the issues around which resistance or setbacks may occur. This is not an all-inclusive list, but it does identify some of the more common places for identifying challenges. These challenges are often subtle, but they can be insidious and challenging. For instance, students who have been successful in traditional classrooms have often become very skilled at learning to produce what the teacher wants. They may become resistant when asked to provide the rationale behind their thinking without there being one right answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues Regarding High Quality Learning Environments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Shifting ownership of learning to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Motivating students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Diversity of learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Administrative attitude toward valuing learning improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Having students prepare for class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Creating an assessment culture in your environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Determining who teaches which courses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just as there are common issues to be anticipated, there are also key skills that a facilitator needs to have honed so that they are consistently apparent to others. The following chart represents a partial listing of those skills.

Key Teaching Skills for Maintaining a High Quality Learning Environment

- Risk-taking
- Following convictions
- Respecting
- Committing to others
- Valuing process
We have already looked at methodologies to be taught to learners so that many of their learning behaviors become habitual. Likewise, there are methodologies to be mastered to lessen some of the stresses of teaching and to assure the consistency that one desires. A methodology for creating a quality learning environment is provided in module 3.1.3 of the Faculty Guidebook.

An effective learning environment has a strong impact upon a person’s growth, development, and performance. In order to improve student learning performance, faculty must create an environment which allows for greater student ownership, responsibility, and control of the learning process. It is important to create this environment early in the course so that mutual trust and respect can develop.

**Methodology for Creating High Quality Learning Environments**

1. Establish initial respect.
2. Start with no prejudging.
3. Obtain shared commitment.
4. Foster and support risk-taking.
5. Permit the learner to fail.
6. Set high expectations.
7. Establish clear performance criteria.
8. Implement a quality assessment system.
Overview of SII Assessment and Evaluation

- SII Assessment:
  - is ongoing
  - is positive
  - is individualized
  - is valuable
  - provides feedback

- Evaluation:
  - provides closure
  - is judgmental
  - is applied against standards
  - shows shortfalls

- Both:
  - require criteria
  - use measurement

Introduction to SII Assessment and Evaluation

Levels of SII Assessor Performance

Assessment vs. Evaluation: The Language We Use

*Faculty Guidebook* 4.1.2 Distinctions Between Assessment and Evaluation

*Faculty Guidebook* 4.1.9 SII Method of Assessment Reporting

To learn more about SII Assessment, we invite you to view the learning objects available at: [www.pcrest.com/LO](http://www.pcrest.com/LO)
SII Assessment and evaluation are two different but complementary educational processes.

**SII Assessment**—SII Assessment (SII: Strengths, Improvements, Insights) is a process used for improving quality. SII Assessment is critical for growing lifelong learning skills and elevating performance in diverse contexts. However, the value of SII Assessment is not always apparent nor is the process always understood. Because there has not always been agreement on a specific definition, there has been some confusion on how to approach SII Assessment to ensure that the feedback is valuable. Principles of SII Assessment are given below: *(from FGB 4.1.1 Overview of Assessment)*

1. SII Assessment focuses on improvement, not judgment.
2. SII Assessment focuses on performance, not the performer.
3. SII Assessment is a process that can improve any level of performance.
4. SII Assessment feedback depends on who both the assessor and the assessee are.
5. Improvement based on SII Assessment feedback is more effective when the assessee seeks assessment.
6. SII Assessment requires agreed-upon criteria.
7. SII Assessment requires analyses of the observations.
8. SII Assessment feedback is accepted only when there is mutual trust and respect.
9. SII Assessment should be used only where there is a strong opportunity for improvement.
10. SII Assessment is effective only when the assessee uses the feedback.

**Evaluation**—Evaluation is a process for determining the quality of a performance or a product. An effective evaluation process includes the use of reliable data for the conduct of the evaluation, the establishment of predefined benchmarks against which performance is measured, and the monitoring of product or performance outcomes. Principles of evaluation are given below: *(from FGB 1.4.6 Overview of Evaluation)*

1. Evaluation focuses on the level of quality of a product or performance based on established standards and criteria.
2. Evaluation is optimized when the performer is fully aware of the performance criteria, consequences, and rewards associated with a given performance.
3. Evaluation criteria are consistent throughout the evaluation, and should not be changed during the evaluation to reactively meet the needs of either the evaluator or the performer.
4. An evaluation is optimally effective when the performer has been given sufficient opportunity to fully perform in the roles to be evaluated, based on pre-defined evaluation criteria.
5. In order for evaluative judgments to be accepted and perceived as sound, evaluation techniques should be perceived as fair and trusted by both the evaluator and the performer.
6. The evaluator should be able to appropriately use or develop an evaluation tool that can measure the level at which performance criteria are met.
7. Evaluation systems should be assessed after each evaluation.
Levels of SII Assessor Performance

**Level 5—Sage**
1. Correctly interprets the key performance areas, and clearly describes the strengths, areas for improvement, and insights in all contexts.
2. Relates the performance issues to the assessee in a way that can transform the quality of the performance.
3. Seeks assessment opportunities in any context and models the use of SII Assessment across various contexts.
4. Removes personal values and biases.

**Level 4—Mentor**
1. Usually interprets the key performance areas, and usually describes the strengths, areas for improvement, and insights in familiar and some unfamiliar contexts.
2. Consistently provides specific, supported feedback that helps the assessee to grow.
4. Seeks SII Assessment opportunities, and models strong SII Assessment techniques within a particular context.

**Level 3—Guide/Coach**
1. Often interprets the key performance areas, and describes the strengths, areas for improvement, and insights best in familiar contexts.
2. Identifies and provides helpful feedback on prominent performance issues.
3. Conducts intermittent SII Assessments, and formulates insights that are valuable to future performance.
4. Appropriately selects performance criteria, and recognizes the specific context of application.

**Level 2—Learner/Player**
1. Sometimes interprets the key performance areas, and sometimes appropriately describes the strengths, areas for improvement, and insights.
2. Provides superficial feedback on obvious performance.
3. Exhibits a mechanical approach by completing SII Assessments by following the steps but without appreciating any future value.
4. Can use given performance criteria to assess within a specific context.

**Level 1—Novice**
1. Offers ambiguous strengths, areas for improvement, and insights, which seldom lead to real improvement.
2. Offers unsupported feedback, which misses many important performance issues.
3. Engages in little or no SII Assessment, and cannot identify growth opportunities.
4. Is biased in every aspect and is oblivious to or unaware of the “affect” of the assessee.
Assessment vs. Evaluation: The Language We Use

It is surprisingly easy to start out intending to perform an assessment, yet end up offering evaluative or evaluative-sounding feedback. This is a trap that even strong assessors can have difficulty avoiding. Much of the problem is that the words we use are not like Lego blocks—they are not innocuous little chunks of self-contained and unchanging meaning that may be freely added to different contexts. The words we use are irrevocably linked to the affect, life experiences, and culture of both the person using the words as well as the person reading/hearing the words. Even if we have the best of intentions, the words we choose do not automatically signify those intentions to others.

As a short and relatively insignificant case-in-point, consider what Ward Cleaver said to his son, Beaver, when he was pleased with something Beaver had done: “That’s fine, son.” The word ‘fine’ would seem to be one which would not cause much confusion among users. But while the popular and current meaning of ‘fine’ is, according to Merriam-Webster ‘all right’ (which is defined as, ‘satisfactory’), the historical (and less colloquial) meaning is, ‘free from impurity’ and thus ‘superior in kind, quality, or appearance.’ This one word, then, can be used by different speakers to denote a quality as either ‘satisfactory’ or ‘superior,’ thus making what Ward meant as a high compliment sound dismissive or condescending to those whose primary meaning for ‘fine’ is ‘satisfactory.’

This is just a single example but for nearly any adjective we might choose, similar issues arise. There is not a definitive dictionary for English and the meanings of the words we use change with surprising rapidity. (It should go without saying that it behooves each of us, as speakers of English, to consider carefully the popular, current, and colloquial meanings of the words we use.)

What does this have to do with Assessment and Evaluation? Consider the following:

1. You were driving 70 mph in a 55 mph zone
2. You are a dangerous driver
3. Your driving can be made more safe by obeying posted speed limits

**Sentence #1** is a statement of fact (let’s assume it’s true) that makes reference to an objective measure. Any further conclusion beyond simply raising the measure and making the measurement opens the door for a host of language issues.

**Sentence #2** is an evaluation or judgment. Looking even more closely (mentally diagramming the sentence), we can see that ‘you’ is defined as a ‘driver,’ with ‘dangerous’ telling us what kind of driver and therefore what kind of ‘you.’ This is intensely personal, and, as a similar sentence demonstrates (“You are a woman”), does not imply a sometime thing or action performed, but an actual state of being. There is no implication that this state can ever be changed (going from being a dangerous driver to a safe driver).

**Sentence #3** is much more SII Assessment-based. It clearly separates the person (you) from the action (driving), making it obvious that the action is something performed rather than a state of being. This impersonal approach automatically relieves the statement from being personal. Further, the statement itself implies how improvement (to safer driving) might be made. Finally, it references, even if indirectly, the objective measures, giving even more information for how that improvement might be made. We could have fallen into the trap of saying, “Your driving can be made less dangerous…” but while this phrasing might avoid the intense personalization of Sentence #1, it clearly implies that the driving is dangerous. **And it may well be,** but if the goal is **improvement,** we prefer to make reference to the improved quality rather than the current one.

Have you ever received what was supposed to be assessment-based feedback, only to feel that you’d been the victim of a drive-by evaluation? Do we need to more carefully consider the way we phrase and word the feedback we give? Or is this a case of, ‘Most people know what I mean’?

This article is from Dialogues, a monthly topic sheet available by subscription from Pacific Crest. Visit www.pcrest2.com/dialogues to learn more.
4.1.2 Distinctions Between Assessment and Evaluation

by Marie Baehr (Vice President for Academic Affairs, Coe College)

Educators use two distinct processes to help students build lifelong learning skills: assessment and evaluation. Assessment provides feedback on knowledge, skills, attitudes, and work products for the purpose of elevating future performances and learning outcomes. Evaluation determines the level of quality of a performance or outcome and enables decision-making based on the level of quality demonstrated. These two processes are complementary and necessary in education. This module draws important distinctions between assessment and evaluation, underscoring the need for both processes to occur at separate places and times, and ideally through different roles (4.1.4 Assessment Methodology and 1.4.7 Evaluation Methodology).

Inconsistent Use of the Terms

In the last fifteen years, much has been written about assessment and evaluation, but the terms have not always had distinct meanings. As accrediting agencies have become increasingly interested in improvement, it has become imperative to have a word that describes feedback for improvement that is distinct from one that describes the determination of quality. To add another layer of confusion from the literature, the word “formative” (used as an adjective with assessment or evaluation) has typically been used to describe an improvement process, while the word “summative” has been used to describe a decision-making process (Brown, Race, & Smith, 1996). However, the words “formative” and “summative” mean “as it is being created” and “addition of all things,” respectively. A process to determine quality can both be accomplished either as a performance is being created or after it is completed, so other words should be used to distinguish the two processes.

In the literature of the last several years, assessment has usually been used to indicate that at least some hint of improvement is expected in the assessment process (Bordon & Owens, 2001; Palomba & Banta, 1999). Similarly, evaluation is usually used to indicate that some sort of judgment of quality will be made. The Faculty Guidebook is consistent in its delineation of these two processes of improvement and judgment. Assessment is the term used to look at how the level of quality of a performance or outcome could be improved in the future; it includes strengths that should be sustained as well as high-priority areas for improvement. The assessment process is not concerned with the level of quality; only with how to improve the level of quality. Evaluation is the term used to describe the determination of the level of quality. The evaluation process focuses only on the actual level of quality with no interest in why that level was attained.

Assessment and evaluation both have their purposes, and, when used correctly, both can add significant value to teaching/learning. However, there can be detrimental effects when the people involved have not agreed whether the process is evaluation or assessment, or when the Assessment Methodology gets confused with the Evaluation Methodology.

Key Attributes

Although assessment and evaluation are used for different reasons, they do have some similar steps. Both involve specifying criteria to observe in a performance or outcome. Both require the collection of data and other evidence by observing the performance or by looking at the outcome or product. Both require a performer and a person who collects information about the performance. Both processes also conclude with a report of the findings which include all the similarities and at least as many differences. The relationship between the people involved is different in the assessment and evaluation processes. In both cases a person (either evaluator or assessor) observes or collects evidence about a performance or outcome; another person (either assessee or evaluatee) performs or develops an outcome. In both cases a person (either the assessee or client) requests the process (either evaluation or assessment). In assessment, the locus of control rests with the performer; in evaluation, it rests with the observer. The report to the performer (assessee or evaluatee) is also vastly different. In the assessment process, the report includes information about why the performance was as strong as it was, and describes what could be done to improve future performances. In assessment, there is no mention of the actual quality of the performance; only how to make the next performance stronger. There is no language indicating the level of quality, such as “good,” “terrible,” “terrific,” or “horrible.” Conversely, in the evaluative report, only information regarding the actual quality of the performance is given. This might be in the form of a grade or a score or an evaluative comment, such as “good work.” The purpose of the evaluative report is to report the level of quality and possibly any consequences based on the determined level of quality. It is not used to suggest improvements in future performances.

Table 1 clarifies the similarities and differences between the two processes. The modules 4.1.1 Overview of Assessment, 1.4.6 Overview of Evaluation, 4.1.4 Assessment Methodology, and 1.4.7 Evaluation Methodology give supporting explanations.
### Differences Between Processes of Assessment and Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the purpose?</td>
<td>to improve the quality of future performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who requests it?</td>
<td>assessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who performs?</td>
<td>assessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who observes the performance?</td>
<td>assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who sets criteria?</td>
<td>assessee and assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who uses the information?</td>
<td>assessee (in future performances)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When can feedback occur?</td>
<td>during or after a performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On what is feedback based?</td>
<td>observations; and strongest and weakest points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is included in the report?</td>
<td>what made the quality of the performance strong; and how might one improve future performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who receives the report?</td>
<td>assessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the report used?</td>
<td>to improve performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Case Studies

Examples of the use of the assessment process or evaluation process can be found in 4.1.1 Overview of Assessment or 1.4.6 Overview of Evaluation respectively. This section addresses ways that evaluation and assessment can become confused.

**Case 1**: The person observing a performance believes he or she is assessing, but the performer perceives the feedback as evaluative because the performer has not worked with the observer to set up criteria and valuable feedback.

**Dysfunctional Partners**

One of the first steps in the Assessment Methodology is for the assessor and assessee to determine the performance or outcome criteria for which the assessee would like to gain feedback. If this step is skipped, no matter how well-meaning the person giving feedback may be, the feedback is likely to be perceived by the assessee as judgmental. Since the control in assessment rests with the assessee, feedback will be used for improvement only if the person receiving the feedback wants to use feedback from the assessor.

**Parent-Child Relations**

All parents want their children to improve. However, parents also want their children to perform at acceptable levels of quality. When a parent gives feedback for improvement using evaluative language to a child in an area in which the child has no desire to improve, the child will perceive this feedback as judgmental. For instance, there is a big difference in the message sent between saying, “Your room is a mess. Clean it up now or you will be punished,” and “If you put your books away and make your bed, your room would look much nicer.”

**In-Class Assessment Exercises**

Students are more used to feeling that they are evaluated by instructors, rather than assessed. Part of the reason for this perception is that instructors do evaluate students by giving grades. Part of the reason is that students are not often included in determining what should be fed back to them. In order for assessment of student learning to work effectively, students must participate in determining the criteria that will be used for their feedback. For example, after giving an assignment that requires a draft, you could ask students to tell you in what areas they would like feedback for improvement. In this way they would have to determine the areas where they feel improvement would make a difference, and it would help clarify that the purpose of the draft is not for a “free” grading cycle.
**Case 2:** A person, observing a performance and using the same criteria, gives assessment feedback as well as evaluative judgments.

**Interim Feedback on Work Products**

Students are often dismayed when they make all the suggested improvements on a paper that was turned in for comment as a rough draft and they do not receive an “A” on the final product. In this case, the instructor has given feedback for improvement without determining the quality of the paper. The student perceives that if he or she improves in the areas noted, he or she will have an excellent paper. One way to avoid this problem while strengthening the assessment process is to ask the students to request feedback on the draft based on set criteria.

**Supervisor as Mentor**

Often chairs of departments are expected to mentor their non-tenured faculty in their department at the same time that they are expected to make decisions on continuing employment. Although the individuals might agree on criteria to use, it becomes difficult for the assessee to feel in control of using or not using the feedback as he or she sees fit, since, at some point, the assessor will become the evaluator. Although this is sometimes unavoidable, the problem can be reduced by choosing the criteria differently in the two cases. In the mentoring situations, the non-tenured faculty member should choose the criteria for focus, while in the evaluative situations, the chair should. In both cases the criteria need to be known by both parties.
Case 3: A person who is more comfortable with the evaluator role is put in the role of assessor.

Expert Assessing a Novice

Sometimes, someone who is so ingrained in an area of expertise is unable to stop judging the quality of a novice performance. Though all criteria and scale are agreed upon, the expert as assessor can sometimes give the feedback in evaluative terms without realizing it. This sometimes happens when faculty start teaching right after they have earned their graduate degree. They are not prepared for the limited understanding and skills of the students who are taking their class. Rather than mentoring the students to help them build their knowledge and skills, the faculty members are sometimes apt to evaluate students as unmotivated and poorly prepared.

First-Time Assessor

Often, when one is used to giving feedback on the level of quality only, someone can feel uncomfortable giving “critical” feedback to an assessee, feeling that pointing out areas to improve is the same as criticizing the performance. This can cause even more problems when the assessee also perceives the feedback as evaluative (Case 1). Practice and building trust help this situation the most but it can also help if the assessor imagines what feedback he or she would have wanted if he or she had been the performer. It is important for the assessee to send the message that he or she would like to have the feedback from someone he or she trusts.

Concluding Thoughts

Discussion in this module is intended to strengthen outcomes from assessment and evaluation in teaching/learning situations. Assessment is a process used to improve a performance or outcome. Evaluation is a process used to determine the quality of a performance or outcome and to make decisions based on the quality. Both processes can be formative (undertaken while an educational process is ongoing) or summative (taken at the conclusion of an educational process). Before starting either assessment or evaluation it is essential for instructors to clarify the purpose of the process. It is then critical to communicate this purpose to everyone involved and to establish whether this will be conducted as assessment or evaluation. Finally, one should be cautious whenever an assessor will ultimately be an evaluator or when assessment is initiated without buy-in of the assessee.

References


Assessment results are most likely to be put into action by an assessee when they are concisely stated, supported by evidence, and delivered in a positive manner. This module outlines a format for informal assessment reports that meets these needs. Known as the SII method, it includes a thoughtful description of assessee strengths, areas for improvement, and insights that can be transferred to other contexts. The SII method is assessee-centered in its language, specific in its use of data from a specific learning context, and enlightening in its recommendations for future action.

4.1.9 SII Method for Assessment Reporting
by Jack Wasserman (Mechanical Engineering, University of Tennessee at Knoxville) and Steven W. Beyerlein (Mechanical Engineering, University of Idaho)

The Role of Self-Assessment

Psychological studies of highly successful people across all domains of intelligence—linguistic, musical, mathematical, scientific, interpersonal, kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and spiritual—reveal that these extraordinary individuals share three behaviors that are the source of sustained personal growth (Gardner, 1998).

- These individuals stand out in the extent to which they reflect, often explicitly, on the events of their lives
- These individuals stand out less by their impressive “raw powers” than by their ability to identify and then exploit their strengths
- These individuals fail often and sometimes dramatically, but they stand out in the extent to which they learn from their setbacks and convert defeats into opportunities

Extraordinary individuals, therefore, possess a strong internal process of thinking about their circumstances, their performance capabilities, and their opportunities for effecting change. The SII method strives to make these attributes explicit in the dialogue between assessor and assessee. It embodies several characteristics known to improve critical thinking, including positiveness, process-orientation, a recognition of contextual details, and the role of emotion as well as reason in human behavior (Brookfield, 1987).

Organization of the SII Report

While the assessee is performing, the assessor must collect information consistent with the chosen criteria (4.1.4 Assessment Methodology). It is important for the assessor to note the strong points of the assessee’s performance (things done well) and why they were considered strong; the areas in which the assessee’s performance could be improved, along with suggestions for how the improvement could be made; and any insights that might help the assessee in other contexts. The SII format provides a succinct way to communicate these findings in a cooperative learning environment.

Strengths—identify the ways in which a performance was of high quality and commendable. Each strength statement should address what was valuable in the performance, why this attribute is important, and how to reproduce this aspect of the performance.

Areas for Improvement—identify the changes that can be made in the future, between this assessment and the next assessment, that are likely to improve performance. Improvements should recognize the issues that caused any problems and mention how changes could be implemented to resolve these difficulties.

Insights—identify new and significant discoveries/understandings that were gained concerning the performance area; i.e., What did the assessor learn that others might benefit from hearing or knowing? Insights include why a discovery/new understanding is important or significant and how it can be applied to other situations.

These statements should be delivered in the order given above first to affirm the assessee and then to apprise him or her of opportunities for additional growth. An assessor should take care to cast these statements in a succinct manner and avoid using judgmental language. As a matter of convenience in written SII reports, each statement can be identified with the appropriate letter (S or I).

Rubric for Elevating SII Reports

The following rubric has been developed to help students visualize different levels of assessment quality and to rate the sophistication of their SII reports. As assessments move up the scale, there is a discernible shift from assessing effort to meaningfully assessing performance.

Level 1—Observation

Strengths and areas for improvement are presented as simple statements. The following statements are typical of this level:

- (S) The presenter was energetic
- (I) The introduction was too long
- (I) The score was not the only goal
Level II—Comprehension of Key Issues

Strengths and improvements are clearly stated, and reasons are given for the strengths and suggestions for improvement. Insights tend to be related to the specific context of the assessment. The following statements are typical of this level:

(S) The enthusiasm of the presenter inspired the audience to ask many questions

(I) Much of the material in the introduction was secondary to the purpose of the talk

(I) The team kept the problem statement in mind, not just the score

Level III—Application in a Related Context

This feedback builds on comprehension of key issues and gives specific ideas for improving performance in a related context. The following statements are typical of this level:

(S) Taking time to practice your presentation can help you deliver your message in a confident and convincing tone

(I) The introduction should highlight a single hypothesis and explain why it is justified

(I) By focusing on the goal of good technical communication, rather than focusing simply on the score, the team reminded everyone about the educational objective of the project

Level IV—Transfer to a New Context

This feedback illustrates generalized understanding and is instructive in applying this understanding across a broad range of contexts. The following statements are typical of this level:

(S) Researching the background of your audience can help you stimulate interest in and attention to your message

(I) Section divisions appear to be seamless in a carefully planned and practiced presentation

(I) By communicating your interpretation of the underlying purpose of an activity, you help everyone assess whether they could have learned more from the activity

Implementing SII Reports

SII reports represent a powerful formative assessment tool that can be used with a great deal of flexibility in the classroom. The following techniques have proven successful in elevating and adding variety to SII reports.

Prioritize findings—Students share only the greatest strength, the greatest area for improvement, and the best insight. This encourages participants to rank the significance of their observations and to defend their thinking.

Limit response time—This is especially valuable for sharing oral assessment reports from multiple teams. Challenge participants to limit SII reports (all three parts) to less than 30 seconds.

Build common understanding—Participants are asked to rephrase what they hear in others’ SII reports. This process can help clarify muddy ideas as well as emphasize important discoveries.

Focus attention—The instruction directs attention to a narrow set of learning skills or performance criteria. Focusing the assessment helps to minimize motherhood-and-apple-pie statements; and instead connects the commentary with specific behaviors.

Rate performance on a scale—As a reference for writing SII statements, the instructor provides several scales or rubrics for ranking performance in key areas. Assigning numerical scores can trigger recollection of supporting evidence that adds more specificity to a written SII report.

Collective feedback—At the end of a reporting session (oral or written), the instructor may use the SII format to comment on the entire spectrum of reports. This serves to reiterate key findings and to establish performance expectations for future reporting sessions.

Concluding Thoughts

One of the driving forces for change in higher education is the need to develop students who are lifelong learners who can adapt to the ever-and-rapidly-changing world around us (Brookfield, 1987). Quality self-assessment provides a solid foundation for such self-growth (Gardner, 1998). By giving and receiving SII reports, learners at any level in the curriculum gain the practice and experience they need to become quality self-assessors and self-growers. SII reports support an assessment culture in which students are motivated to perform better and proactively seek to improve their own performance.

References


Mentoring Tools and Techniques

Activity: Analysis of the Role, Tools, and Techniques of Mentors
Table Contrasting Teaching and Mentoring Results
Description of a Mentor
Profile of a Mentor
What a Mentor is NOT
Performance Expectations of a Mentor
Performance Criteria for a Mentor
Principles of Mentoring
Mentoring Methodology
Attributes of High Quality Mentoring
Documentation:
Ways to Better Connect with Your Students
Faculty Tips: Practicing Tough Love in the Classroom
Faculty Guidebook 4.3.4 The Accelerator Model
Mentoring for students’ growth as a person may be a very new role for many faculty. When exploring something new, it often helps to begin with something that is more familiar, i.e., classroom teaching. Though many of us have not had formalized mentor/mentee relationships, most of us can identify mentors in our lives. The materials in this activity are designed to provide definitions, descriptions, principles, and a methodology for mentoring. The materials are also intended to help participants begin to think about the affective issues associated with mentoring.

1. Individually spend 25 minutes reviewing the resources provided that describe:
   - Effective Mentoring—Teaching versus Instructing
   - Description of a Mentor
   - Profile of a Mentor
   - Performance Expectations of a Mentor
   - Principles of Mentoring
   - Mentoring Methodology
   - Attributes of High Quality Mentoring
   - Ways to Better Connect with Your Students
   - “Faculty Tips: Practicing Tough Love in the Classroom” Reflections, Issue 3 (Fall 2006) from Pacific Crest
   - 4.3.4 The Accelerator Model

2. Reflect on an experience when you were mentored. Be prepared to briefly describe what made that relationship valuable.

3. The facilitator will request 3 or 4 participants to share their stories of being mentored.

4. As you listen to the stories, jot notes in the table on the Mentoring Methodology as you hear steps referenced.

5. Participate in a large group discussion concerning the methodology.

6. Collectively identify ways that you will need to be prepared to engage differently in the affective domain when assuming the role of mentor.

Activity End
Table Contrasting Teaching and Mentoring Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective teaching results in quality learning of new subject matter.</th>
<th>Effective mentoring results in learning/growth by the mentee.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>With an Instructor...</strong></td>
<td><strong>With a Mentor/Teacher...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the focus is on content</td>
<td>the focus is on <em>learning</em> the content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the control is with him or her</td>
<td>the control is with the learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the learner takes opportunities that exist</td>
<td>the mentee chooses the mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he or she is knowledgeable of the discipline</td>
<td>he or she is knowledgeable of the individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he or she is a professional in the discipline area</td>
<td>he or she is a professional within the discipline of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he or she is a content master; a know-it-all</td>
<td>he or she is an active learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he or she has the capability to mentor, but isn't aware of it</td>
<td>he or she is conscious of doing mentoring behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge is transmitted</td>
<td>the construction of knowledge is facilitated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he or she uses evaluation more often</td>
<td>he or she uses more SII Assessment more often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description of a Mentor**

A mentor is open-minded and through active and respectful listening provides practical guidance on key issues defined by the mentee. The mentor establishes a very strong rapport and professional friendship by being able to relate and be empathetic. The mentor provides encouragement, motivates and challenges performance. A mentor is honest and confidential in giving reliable, realistic, and appropriate advice through innovative thought and strong problem solving. A mentor also sets high standards for performance and provides ongoing SII Assessment that leads to growth academically and personally. Both mentor/mentee have performance criteria. A mentor seeks to be a self-grower and helps the mentee to become a self-grower also. Mentor focuses on professional development of both the mentee and mentor through a motivation to perform exceptionally. The mentor is a strong and well respected professional who is a quality role model. A mentor provides a strong prospective and is accessible professionally to share relevant experiences. The mentor is willing to take significant risks to support the right type of advocacy.
A mentor is…

— a trusted advisor, a provider of wise counsel and advice (Oxford Dictionary)

— a teacher, coach, advisor (Pacific Crest Teaching Institute Handbook)
  • a particular kind of relationship in which a person with identified abilities or competencies enables another human being to develop his/her own abilities and talents
  • a close personal relationship, a process of working together to achieve agreed upon goals
  • a mutual relationship, with mentors and mentees deriving satisfaction from their alliance (Mentor 2000 – mentoring at-risk students)

— an adult who, along with parents, provides young people with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement and constructive example; mentors are good listeners, people who care, people who want to help young people bring out strengths that are already there.
  • a mentor is a guide, friend, listener, coach, responsive adult
  • a mentor is not a savior, foster parent, therapist, cool peer (National Mentoring Partnership)

### Profile of a Mentor

#### Characteristics of a quality mentor…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor’s Perspective</th>
<th>Mentee’s Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is honest</td>
<td>is honest and dedicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is a role model who leads by example</td>
<td>is a like a big brother or sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establishes strong rapport</td>
<td>maintains confidentiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is an active listener</td>
<td>is a good listener; is able to relate well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gives reliable and appropriate advice</td>
<td>is a good problem solver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shares relevant experiences</td>
<td>is a person who is caring and shares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides practical guidance on relevant issues</td>
<td>is realistic; offers strong guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is open-minded</td>
<td>is an advocate (which may require taking risks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has empathy</td>
<td>is proud of what he or she does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides encouragement</td>
<td>is supportive and positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is a good motivator</td>
<td>is a good motivator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is available/accessible in different domains</td>
<td>is there when you need him or her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is a friend</td>
<td>is a trusted friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides leadership</td>
<td>is an innovator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has high standards, challenges performance</td>
<td>presents new challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides SII assessment that leads to growth</td>
<td>is caring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognizes mentor’s limits</td>
<td>resource for expanding network of mentee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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continued on following page
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor's Perspective</th>
<th>Mentee's Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>recognize mentor's assets</td>
<td>someone you want to emulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sets high expectations for follow-through by mentee</td>
<td>honest about mentor's limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articulates/demonstrates professional values (walk &amp; talk)</td>
<td>communicates straightforwardly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facilitates correction of misconceptions</td>
<td>mentor committed to success of mentee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solicits help when appropriate</td>
<td>knowledgeable and prepared (don't wing it)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continual learner</td>
<td>reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create situation where mentee wants to grow performance</td>
<td>mentor challenges the mentee to improve performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empowers mentee to develop ownership of outcomes</td>
<td>mentor encourages mentee responsibility for performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>works toward making relationship obsolete effective with student's time</td>
<td>mentor provides SII Assessment that leads to growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>does not violate boundaries of relationship</td>
<td>willing to accept feedback on mentoring performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establishes/maintains boundaries for relationship</td>
<td>mentor asks for feedback on how to improve sensitive, adaptable, and flexible in responding to needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good critical thinking skills</td>
<td>good problem solving skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facilitates mentee's progress over obstacles</td>
<td>facilitating mentee's progress over obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong understanding of mentee's capabilities</td>
<td>strong understanding of mentee's capabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What a Mentor is NOT

1. Not a professional counselor
2. Not a relative who gives special treatment

### Performance Expectations of a Mentor

1. Availability with respect to student’s schedule:  
   a) any hour  
   b) 2–4 hours/week
2. Honesty in making sure full truthful disclosure is given in a timely fashion: Letting students know when they are out of bounds.
3. Interest in Student Success: some colleges pay faculty for each student graduate.
4. ATTITUDE toward mentoring even more critical than technical skills
5. Provide SII Assessment that leads to growth, both academically and socially
6. Active listener, motivator and innovator (giving a new way to look at things or get them thinking out of the box)
7. Establish strong rapport and connecting
Performance Criteria for a Mentor

1. Strong listener to identify specific individual needs and group needs
2. Right level of advocacy in making sure needs are taken care of in a timely manner
3. Effective modeler of specific skills needed
4. Provide strong SII Assessment of individual and team performance
5. Know the difference between doing for them vs. having them learn to do for themselves
6. Provide caring environment with strong interest in their success
7. Being able to consult effectively their issues
8. Challenging them to address issues and problems and take them head on
9. Ability to link resources and additional help outside your expertise
10. Being on top of what is going on to better self-manage your role

Principles of Mentoring

1. Must believe in the potential of the mentee
2. Both parties must consistently show mutual respect and trust
3. Open, clear communication with active listening
4. Volunteered relationship
5. Counsel by prompting self-discovery
6. Advocate when requested
7. Commitment to do what is needed
8. Must have quality SII Assessment integrated in the relationship.
9. Must be based on honest give and take.
10. Mentor must be respected in the ‘community’.
11. Relationship is based on very focused growth needs of mentee.
12. Relationship must offer growth opportunities for the mentor.
13. Relationship must have a natural agreed upon closure point
14. Awareness and acceptance of different viewpoints and value systems.
15. Mentor is expected to challenge mentees to reach their desired outcomes
16. Mentor and mentee are as conscious of the process as they are of the product.
## Mentoring Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in Methodology</th>
<th>Best practices gleaned from stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A need for mentoring is recognized by the mentee.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The mentee selects an appropriate mentor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The mentor clarifies goals with the mentee.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The mentor and mentee put together a quality plan.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Both mentor and mentee make a commitment to follow through with the plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The mentor and mentee design an SII Assessment plan.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. The mentor and mentee implement the plan (including the SII Assessment plan).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The mentor monitors the plan, appropriately providing support and challenge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The mentee celebrates growth at key points.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The mentor and mentee celebrate final success.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The relationship between the mentor and mentee is ended.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The mentee celebrates growth at key points.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The mentor and mentee celebrate final success.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. The relationship between the mentor and mentee is ended.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: the essence of mentoring a person’s growth is to provide SII-type assessment feedback in real-time.*
Attributes of High Quality Mentoring

- Mentee has ownership for their accomplishment and performance level
- Mentee has accomplished the goal he or she sought
- Mentee can continue personal development in that specific area of growth targeted
- Mentee is satisfied with the growth he or she has made and that growth is documented.
- Mentee is willing to sever the relationship

Documentation

Mentors should frequently write up SII Assessment reports, copying the student and a Student Mentoring Notebook. It is valuable to create a one-page student profile that lists 10–12 characteristics about the student and several things that are of value to that student. This can be used as a reference in weekly meetings. Mentoring is most likely to achieve mentee goals if time is allocated to lay out and update a semester by semester educational plan.

Ways to Better Connect with Your Students

1. Listen for the non-verbal signs and show that you have listened
2. Take myself lightly while taking my work seriously
3. Admit when you make mistakes
4. Give them respect
5. Share life experience through story telling
6. Learn their name quickly and something about them
7. Greet them at the door by name
8. Exchange informational background with students
9. Produce humor
10. Give them small rewards at key times
11. Give the learner a chance to share something very important
12. Engage in active listening
13. Make yourself available
14. Showing genuine concern
15. Give positive feedback when needed
16. Don’t embarrass them
17. Give individual SII Assessments tailored to their needs
18. Be empathetic to their feelings
19. Create an accepting and caring learning environment (separate issues from people)
20. Clearly defined expectations
21. Helping the process match with their needs
22. Be honest
23. Knowing and sharing goals to help the matching
24. Accepting responsibility in the relationship and for the relationship
25. Seeing them at a different setting – seeing them as a person
26. Doing something special for them – eg. Baking cookies
27. Celebrate with them for special situations like birthdays, etc.
28. Giving them opportunities for SII Assessment
29. Accept their feedback and make changes due to their feedback
30. Mutual respect and valuing of each other in the process
31. Willingness to allow student recover from failures or poor performances
32. Shared efforts/projects
33. Sharing of values and important aspects of your life
34. Opening the syllabus for modification and shared ownership
Failure is success if we learn from it. —Malcolm Forbes

Failure, when managed appropriately by faculty, can be a catalyst for the growth, development, and improved performance of the adult learner. In *Letting Students Fail so They Can Succeed*, author Jim Hadley defines the term “tough love,” researches some issues in practicing tough love in the classroom, and makes several suggestions to assist faculty as they encourage their students to take risks and learn important lessons from failure. Failure within the classroom environment can be turned into an opportunity for growth and performance improvement, if faculty are willing to set high expectations and foster learning environments that are growth-oriented and nonjudgmental. We thank Jim Hadley from Hamilton College for these practical tips on practicing tough love in the college classroom.

### Faculty Tips: Practicing Tough Love in the Classroom

- **Have personal and emotional toughness**
  - Allowing students to feel the full cognitive and affective experience of failure is necessary if they are to grow and develop skills to successfully handle similar tasks in the future.

- **Allow students to experience frustration**
  - Although it is often uncomfortable for faculty to remain silent during a failed student performance, doing so provides the student with the full affective and social experience.

- **Avoid enabling behavior**
  - Faculty must recognize the difference between coaching behaviors that allow for growth and enabling behaviors that produce dependency.

- **Use peer interaction**
  - If classmates are willing to discuss their own sub-standard performances with each other, they may become more resilient and will engage in similar tasks more readily. Faculty can help facilitate this process by planning challenging cooperative activities during which group interaction can help mitigate the consequences of failure. If tough love is shared proportionally in a group activity, individuals will perform to a higher standard due to the synergistic effect of the group.

- **Do not allow students to quit**
  - If faculty express a strong belief in a student’s ability to succeed, if they encourage students to take risks, experience failure, and develop successful learning strategies, it will enhance students’ commitment to try again.

- **Share personal experience of failure**
  - Faculty can share and reflect on their own academic failures and poor performance with their students. This model for growth encourages students to persevere.

- **Let students experience failure in small steps**
  - Setting high expectations and allowing students to fail in incremental steps will actually build trust and commitment between the faculty member and his or her students. Small failures are more easily coached and will allow for immediate feedback on specific areas of performance.

- **Do not question your performance as an instructor when students fail**
  - Faculty must recognize that it is not necessarily a reflection on their ability to teach effectively when they allow students to fail in their first attempt at a new academic performance. If expectations are set at the appropriate level for growth, the majority of students will experience short-term failure throughout the learning process.

- **Provide feedback**
  - Continuous and immediate feedback can also assist faculty in instituting a tough-love strategy for student performance. Peer review can also be used to generate encouragement and commitment to difficult tasks. Peer feedback is often less threatening than faculty feedback; it motivates students to take necessary risks and to try new methods.
Conventional wisdom states that teachers teach best by reducing any kind of stress on students in order to make them comfortable during learning activities. Often teachers reduce student stress by implementing methods that lower expectations, even though nothing could be farther from the real needs of students or the desires of their teachers. This module outlines a model which educators can use to reflect on the right level of challenge in different learning situations. The model considers the interaction of a learner’s ability, the level of academic challenge, and the level of the learner’s affective skills. It supports the idea that education needs to begin with ambitious learning outcomes and should be executed in a manner that supports students’ strengths, provides opportunities for practice that include assessment feedback, and treats learner skills as abilities that can grow and change over time.

Role of Challenge and Support in Learning

Learning outcomes achieved in the classroom are a product of the level of learner challenge and the level of learner support maintained by the educator. The learning experience needs to be knowledge centered as well as student-centered and should be mediated by ongoing assessment (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). Typically, students seek a comfort zone in which the challenge they take does not exceed their perceived level of skill or competency. This is often the learning state that exists outside the classroom or in passive learning environments. Educational researchers have concluded that limited learning is likely to occur under these circumstances (Ames & Archer, 1988).

Putting students in an active learning environment places more challenge and stress on students, and the literature demonstrates that this is highly effective in generating mastery and increasing student motivation for attempting tasks that exceed their current abilities (Bandura, 1997). A key element of cooperative learning is managing the stress (affect) of team members. If this stress is properly managed, the team will experience increased creativity and productivity. The increase in higher-level learning by individual members of the team often exceeds the expectations of team members who thought the standard was too high, and sometimes exceeds levels that faculty thought too high (Michaelsen, Knight, & Fink, 2004).

Many authors emphasize the critical role of affect in decision making and performance because of its influence on cognitive processes (Damasio, 2005; Goleman, 1997; Picard, 1997). Mikulincer (1988) found that learners who use an “internal” attribution perspective (an assumption that they are personally invested and that results depend on their efforts) are more strongly affected initially by frustrating feedback, or failure, but will persist if there is only one failure. Learners who attribute their learning to external factors may not take as much responsibility for their own learning and therefore may be less frustrated. Gist, Schwoerer, and Rosen (1989) found that the students who believe they will be able to meet the challenge tend to be more comfortable with the task and, as they predict, perform better. Their study and others combine to form a compelling case for a more active classroom environment in which affect, as well as the cognitive gains of the student, are closely monitored. It is easy to increase challenge in a lecture environment, but without the support system created by active feedback and/or a team environment, students will rapidly move beyond frustration to anger and disengagement.

Elements of the Model

The Accelerator Model shown in Figure 1 incorporates three variables that regulate the growth and development of students’ cognitive and affective learning skills. These variables are the cognitive skill set of students, the affective skill set possessed by students, and the degree of challenge initiated by the instructor.

- The x-axis represents the challenge or degree of difficulty associated with a task or activity. Typically, the instructor can control this factor by varying the time allowed and/or varying the quality requirements of the performance/work product.

- The y-axis represents a person’s current level of cognitive ability or the strength of his or her cognitive skills.

- A 45-degree line called the “equal match line” represents situations in which the degree of challenge matches a person’s skill set. This line represents learning situations in which a person feels comfortable but is not challenged to grow his or her cognitive skill set.

- The z-axis represents the current strength of a person’s “affective” skill set, e.g., risk-taking, persisting, handling failures, experiencing successes.
Setting the Level of Challenge

If a facilitator’s main goal is to increase or maximize the learning of content, then the degree of challenge should be set above the equal match line at a maximum cognitive growth line. Figure 2 shows how increasing the learning challenge (x-axis) without a corresponding increase in the cognitive skill set (y-axis) leads to increasing levels of negative affect, which typically follow a pattern of anxiety followed by frustration, anger, and disengagement. The greatest potential for learning occurs at the lower edge of the “happy zone” where the degree of challenge exceeds a person’s cognitive skill set but not enough to cause anxiety or frustration. One implication of Figure 2 is that, if a facilitator already has detailed knowledge of the affective and cognitive skill sets of a learner, it is possible to predict the appropriate level of challenge. Effective use of the Accelerator Model therefore depends on regular and careful monitoring of the affect levels of learners in order to maintain the “best fit” level of challenge. The Accelerator Model provides justification for increasing or backing off the “accelerator” if the level of challenge moves slightly too far in either direction.

Maximizing Learner Growth

It is important to realize that personal growth in the affective domain occurs only when a learner is below his or her happy zone (Figures 3 and 4). Therefore, a facilitator focusing on affective growth must set the degree of challenge so students experience some degree of uneasiness. A facilitator should be careful to guard against anger and disengagement, and control the amount of time spent in frustration. Ideally, a little time at the anxiety level can be motivating, but when learners move to frustration and beyond, significant disruption of the learning process occurs. It is difficult to discern anxiety, and in a class of any size, some students will be anxious, while others may be bored. To add to the facilitator’s assessment challenge, evidence presented in the research review above indicates that the attribution perspective (internal versus external) of a learner has a subtle but significant impact on the level of challenge that the learner will accept in a given context. Figures 3 and 4 represent how learners with low versus high affective skill sets react to the same learning challenge.

Figure 3 shows that for a given level of cognitive skills, a person with low affective skills has a smaller happy zone and, therefore, can handle lesser degrees of challenge before encountering anxiety, and takes less time to move through the stages from anxiety to frustration to anger and finally disengagement. Figure 4 shows that as a person’s affective skill set increases, he or she is better able to handle increased levels of challenge because the comfort zone itself becomes wider, and the person is better able to perform outside his or her comfort zone, effectively managing anxiety and frustration when it occurs. In general, as the affective skill set improves, the comfort zone widens and the accelerator can be pushed down further before anxiety and frustration are reached. Increasing or decreasing expectations by varying the level of challenge is analogous to variations in pressure on an accelerator. For example, the level of challenge (pushing down on the accelerator) can be achieved by decreasing the amount of time allocated and/or by increasing the criteria for performance.

Managing Frustration

Because the benefits from the Accelerator Model derive from occasionally and intentionally pushing students “over the line,” special attention should be given to assessing and managing the level of student frustration. The following are a number of proven techniques and considerations.

Course Orientation

The beginning of a course is an ideal time to connect course learning outcomes with different skill sets (cognitive, social, and affective) required for successful performance in the modern workforce. In this discussion you may want to introduce rubrics and skill listings from the Classification of Learning Skills (2.3.3), Cognitive Domain (2.3.4), Social Domain (2.3.5), and Affective Domain (2.3.6). Finally, explain how the Accelerator Model supports a productive learning environment and inform students that you will remind them of its use throughout the course.
Diversity in Activities
Mix the types and levels of learning activities used throughout the course so that the strengths of each student are affirmed and challenged. When you structure learning activities, respect different learning styles so that all students have similar opportunities to become engaged in the course.

Reflective Writing Assignments
Use free writing as a means for students to express their emotions and become self-aware of their growth as well as their frustrations. Read what they write and provide observations of your own. The Learning Assessment Journal (Apple, 2000) offers a variety of structured reflections that can stimulate metacognition as well as teacher/student dialogue.

Monitor Classwide Affect
Show your students that you care about their personal and professional development as well as their ideas for teaching improvement by asking for feedback in midterm assessment exercises. Effective inquiry questions are suggested in 3.3.6 Mid-Term Assessment. Take time to process what your students are learning and feeling, publicly report your findings, and adopt some of the corrective actions they suggest.
Do Not Overreact

Faculty often project their own emotions into teaching situations and pull back on the accelerator prematurely. Allow your students to demonstrate their emotions and treat these episodes as opportunities to relieve but not transfer stress. Visit with an angry student after class and affirm his or her anger, but do not take ownership for it. The key to dealing with most affective issues is to understand that the person who is feeling bad is usually responsible for making himself or herself feel bad. At the same time, recognize that your own affect is responsible for how much challenge you are able to place before your students.

Gear Shift

One way to “depress the accelerator” is to increase the challenge by decreasing the time allowed to accomplish a task. Learners benefit from opportunities to control the pacing or speed of their learning. Once your class is comfortable with your use of the Accelerator Model, you might consider giving individuals in your class control of the “gear shift.” This allows them to define their resource needs and negotiate the time needed to meet the performance criteria of a learning activity.

Concluding Thoughts

Adding complexity or restricting time available for a learning activity will increase the demand for affective skills. One of the most important factors in the growth of your students is the development of their affective skill set for managing the anxiety, frustration, and even anger or disengagement which could impede their learning progress. Until students discover “the pleasure of finding things out” and become self-growers, teachers need to manage the affect of their students and help them strengthen their skills in the cognitive, social, and affective domains. To more effectively use the Accelerator Model, you should periodically reflect on the following questions:

- Are my learning outcomes appropriate for the developmental level of my students?
- What are the top three reasons for frustration in my course?
- What situations appear to cause movement from anxiety to frustration, anger, and disengagement?
- What actions can be taken to reduce the current frustration without compromising key course outcomes?

References


Section 5

Making Connections and Setting Boundaries

*Faculty Guidebook* 3.1.4 Establishing Initial Respect

*Faculty Guidebook* 3.1.6 Obtaining Shared Commitment

*Faculty Guidebook* 3.1.7 Setting High Expectations

*Faculty Guidebook* 3.1.8 Letting Students Fail So They Can Succeed
Remember!
1. A mentor must believe in the potential of the mentee
2. Both parties must consistently show mutual respect and trust
3. Open, clear communication with active listening
4. Volunteered relationship
5. Counsel by prompting self-discovery
6. Advocate when requested
7. Commitment to do what is needed
8. Must have quality SII Assessment integrated in the relationship.
9. Must be based on honest give and take.
10. Mentor must be respected in the ‘community’.
11. Relationship is based on very focused growth needs of mentee.
12. Relationship must offer growth opportunities for the mentor.
13. Relationship must have a natural agreed upon closure point
14. Awareness and acceptance of different viewpoints and value systems.
15. Mentor is expected to challenge mentees to reach their desired outcomes
16. Mentor and mentee are as conscious of the **process** as they are of the **product**.
3.1.4 Establishing Initial Respect Without Prejudging

by Peter Smith (Mathematics & Computer Science, St. Mary’s College, Emeritus)

In context after context, an engaging, stimulating, and challenging learning environment can significantly enhance performance and growth. The first step in creating this environment is to establish respect for and among the participants. Although pre-assessment is certainly necessary, in order to be successful, it is essential that the facilitator not prejudge the performers. This module illustrates a distinction: that between respecting participants’ actual perceived performance and believing so strongly in their potential for excellent performance that they perform well to avoid disappointing the facilitator. The module also describes a set of tools and techniques, including self-introduction during the initial class meeting.

Need for Initial Respect

A quality learning environment must be based on respect between the participants and the facilitator (3.1.1 Overview of Quality Learning Environments). Without this respect, students tend to lack confidence in their abilities, and teachers find themselves unable to believe that every student can be a star. At the beginning of a course or workshop, the participants are apprehensive and in some cases they expect to fail. They lack the fortitude to persevere. If trust and respect is established, however, participants will not want to disappoint the facilitator and, for this reason alone, they will try to meet expectations. After awhile, they will gain confidence in their ability to succeed and will strive to perform well so as not to disappoint themselves. One way to create an atmosphere of trust in the classroom is to make the course standards clear and then to adhere to these standards fairly (Provitera-McGlynn, 2001).

It is difficult to establish respect for student performance at the start of a course because the facilitator has not yet observed the participants in action. At this stage, the teacher has to respect each student’s potential to perform, and to express this belief so strongly that students begin to trust that they will be supported through both success and failure. This belief that there is no limit to a person’s ability to learn is at the core of the Process Education philosophy (2.3.1 Introduction to Process Education).

Instructor Introductions

The first class or workshop meeting is the time to establish initial respect and to begin to convince participants to buy into the learning process (3.1.5 Getting Student Buy-In). When facilitators introduce themselves, it is important that they be forthright in expressing their belief that all students have the potential to succeed as learners, and to be honest in revealing some of the learning challenges that they themselves have faced. Participants have to believe that facilitators have experienced familiar learning difficulties and that they are capable as well as willing to stay with each participant as they grow as learners. A good way to cement this interdependency is for the facilitator and the participants to sign a learning contract (3.1.6 Obtaining Shared Commitment).

Preassessment versus Prejudgment

The second step in the Methodology for Creating a Quality Learning Environment (3.1.3) is to start with no prejudging. If participants think they are being judged before they have had an opportunity to perform, they will not be able to trust the facilitator and all the groundwork discussed in the previous paragraph will be wasted. There is a vast difference between judging and assessing. The purpose of assessment is to help the learner improve by focusing on what he or she has done well, to describe how they can improve, and to generate insights about the students’ learning progress and potential (4.1.1 Overview of Assessment). By contrast, judging is a form of evaluation performed by the facilitator and over which the learner has no control (4.1.2 Distinctions Between Assessment and Evaluation). When facilitators do not prejudge participants, this does not mean that they ignore information that they may know about them (such as the quality of their performance in prerequisite classes); it means that facilitators do not let this information create prejudicial attitudes toward students. The next section will discuss some techniques for pre-assessment that can deepen the mutual respect between facilitators and participants.

Implementation Tips

A number of helpful tools and techniques for establishing initial respect are described below. The module Identifying Learner Needs provides a similar set of techniques, although their purpose is quite different. That module focuses on inquiring about personal needs and identifying gaps in knowledge and skill development. This module focuses on parties introducing themselves, enhancing their strengths, and their promoting their willingness to work together.
Setting the Stage—Before class starts, arrange chairs in a circle, write your name on board, chat with early arrivals, and ask students to get acquainted with their neighbors (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006).

Instructor Testimonial—Give a candid self-introduction in which you relate your professional skills to your experience at an age similar to that of participants or in a course similar to this (Provitera-McGlynn, 2001).

Round-Robin Introductions—Give each student a number of questions to use in interviewing another classmate. After the interviews, ask the interviewers use the information they have just gained to introduce the interviewees to the rest of the group or to a subset of the class (Krumsieg & Baehr, 2000).

Two Truths and a Lie—Ask each participant to tell three things about himself or herself, one being untrue. Ask the others to try to guess which “fact” is untrue by asking insightful questions.

Peer Testimonials—Ask several students from a previous course offering to give brief statements about their learning experiences, including the challenges they encountered, and the resulting personal growth. Allow the panel members to spend some time afterward answering questions from new students.

Burning Questions—Divide the class into small groups. Have each group review the course syllabus or a course assessment from a previous class (3.3.6 Mid-Term Assessment) and have them pose to you their most burning questions about the course. Answer these for the entire class (Krumsieg & Baehr, 2000).

Philosophy Statement—Ask students to do a free writing assignment in which they describe their vision of an ideal learning environment. Ask them to comment on how well this vision was realized in prerequisite courses, and ask them to suggest how this might be implemented in this course.

Student Survey—Ask students to fill out a one-page survey that gives information about their pre-college background, their preparation for this course, special skills/experiences they can draw on to contribute to the course, and their academic career plans (Davis, 2001).

Learning Contract—Give students a contract like the one described in 3.1.6 Obtaining Shared Commitment. After fielding questions and making small edits, sign it, and ask everyone else to sign it as well. Keep copies available in a binder to refer to during individual and team consultations.

Concluding Thoughts

This module challenges you to moderate your use of authority in the initial class session in order to avoid misperceptions and to gain the respect of each student. Though this openness seems to undermine the instructor’s need to maintain a professional image, it is necessary to ensure that students trust you enough to take the necessary risks to grow their performance capabilities to the level expected at the end of the course. We encourage you to try some of the techniques described in this module at the start of a new semester or workshop and to continue to build a quality learning environment for your students and yourself by obtaining shared commitment, fostering and supporting risk-taking, permitting learners to fail, implementing a quality assessment system, documenting performance, and continuously challenging performance.

References


3.1.6 Obtaining Shared Commitment

by Peter Smith (Mathematics & Computer Science, St. Mary’s College, Emeritus) and Steven W. Beyerlein (Mechanical Engineering, University of Idaho)

For optimum learning to occur, faculty and students must commit to working together to achieve the course outcomes, and they need to make this commitment public so that there is no misunderstanding. This module, one of several which illustrate steps in the Methodology for Creating a Quality Learning Environment, clarifies the concept of full faculty and student commitment. Students must be committed to learning, to their community, and to hard work. Faculty must be committed to helping students achieve the course outcomes, and they have specific responsibilities for supporting students and for holding them accountable. Several techniques for obtaining shared commitment are described and documented in this module, and a sample commitment form is included.

Elements of Student Commitment

In every learning situation, success depends in large part on how committed the participants are to themselves, to the community of learners, and to the process of learning. Commitment to self entails a belief that one’s potential is not limited by current abilities; that every learner can learn to learn better (2.3.1 Introduction to Process Education). Commitment to the community of learners involves accepting a shared vision in a cooperative venture and being willing to participate fully, even though participation may entail significant risk-taking in front of others and the need to work past failure of self and others. Commitment to the process of learning requires openness to diverse learning approaches, such as active learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991), cooperative learning (Millis & Cottell, 1998), and reflective learning or metacognition (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). Students also need to be open to faculty efforts to build commitment.

Elements of Faculty Commitment

Most faculty are committed to their discipline and to their course content, but this alone will not result in shared commitment. A faculty member must also show passion for student learning, create a mood of trust within the learning environment, challenge student performance, and believe in the unlimited ability of students to grow as learners. Faculty must convince students of their commitment to student growth and to student success in the course and beyond. Students must know that faculty have their best interests at heart. To create a foundation for negotiating shared commitment, faculty can use tools such as organized classroom management and effective time management.

Techniques for Negotiating Commitment

Once both students and faculty are willing to commit themselves to the learning process, the facilitator needs to negotiate a public declaration of this shared commitment.

Here are two approaches.

Analyzing a Learning Contract

One technique is for the facilitator to hand out a list of expectations for performance for both himself or herself and also for the students. (See Figure 1 for an example.) The students discuss this list in teams; they decide which elements are acceptable, and add additional ones. From the team reports, a common list can be created and all parties sign the bottom and receive a copy. It should be emphasized that the course involves a non-traditional learning environment, so it is important to think outside the box. For example, students will not be lectured about material that can easily be read from the book outside of class. In class, they will take part in activities that require them to work through the material, learning to understand it in their own way.

Drafting a Learning Contract

Another technique is to have teams brainstorm a list of what they hope to gain from the learning experience of the course. As this list is inventoried, the teams create another list of what each party will have to do to reach that outcome. From this second list, a shared commitment agreement can be drawn up and signed. There are many modifications of this technique. For example, students can brainstorm the top five things about their earlier courses they want to keep and the top five things they want to change. As these lists are inventoried, the facilitator may or may not agree to avoid behavior falling in the first list and adopt recommended changes from the second list. After making sure the other teams agree with each proposal, the facilitator can describe his or her expectations about how the students would have to behave in order for the change to work. From this list of behaviors a shared commitment document can be prepared and signed.

Once the commitment has been negotiated, it is important that both students and faculty hold each other accountable to fulfill the shared agreement.
Faculty Holding Students Accountable

After each student has signed the public commitment agreement, often called a learning contract, it is the responsibility of the instructor to hold them to it. During every interaction with the student, both in and out of class, the faculty member looks for ways to challenge the student to improve his or her performance. It is important to carry a copy of the learning contract, so that, should the student resist the performance challenge, the instructor can remind him or her about the signed commitment. It is best to do this in private if at all possible, unless peer pressure to excel is necessary. A good way to talk privately with each student is to set up a sequence of performance reviews. Similar to performance reviews in business or industry, this scheduled meeting allows both faculty and student to review their level of commitment to the course, to negotiate adjustments in the contract, to set performance goals, and to review grade expectations.

Students Holding Faculty Accountable

Because of the disparity in power between students and faculty, many students are reluctant to challenge a faculty member. It is, therefore, important to build opportunities into a course for students to give feedback in a formal assessment process. Three natural opportunities are the mid-term evaluation, the learning assessment journal, and the performance review discussed above. A recommended time for the performance review is about four weeks into a course, usually after the first exam or equivalent assignment. At that time faculty can solicit feedback from each student, asking each to give strengths, areas for improvements and insights about the course (3.3.6 Mid-Term Assessment). Students can mention deficiencies in faculty commitment as an area for improvement. The learning assessment journal contains a free writing section that is perfect for a student to express frustrations about faculty commitment. Faculty should collect and read the journals early in the term. No matter how the faculty member becomes aware that some students are disappointed in the level of faculty commitment, the instructor should address the issue openly in class and either announce changes to conform to the shared commitment agreement or discuss the reasons why it is not possible make the changes at that time.

Concluding Thoughts

Shared commitment among faculty and students in a learning experience is a precondition for building a quality learning environment. It takes maturity on the part of both students and faculty to make and keep such a commitment. Faculty may find it awkward and students may find it embarrassing to challenge each other to fulfill the public agreement. Fortunately, Process Education philosophy and practice encompasses a number of strategies and techniques which make it easier to hold each other accountable, resulting in rich and dynamic learning experiences.

References


3.1.7 Setting High Expectations

High expectations are intended to create a credible and relevant gap between participants’ present and future performance. In today’s academic culture students tend to avoid endeavors where poor performance may expose them to peer ridicule, making motivation to close the gap a special challenge. Setting high expectations requires supportive interaction among the learning community, the participants, and the instructional staff. This module gives techniques for engaging each of these constituencies around high expectations for performance.

Motivating Learners

One of the oddities of youth culture today is that they consider it better to be thought lazy than stupid (Cross, 2001). Thus, if students feel threatened by failure, they will not try very hard so that their lack of success will indicate to others a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability. How can we convince such students that not only effort but also ability can be improved by their own actions? Researchers have studied this problem of motivation extensively. They have observed two main types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsically motivated students respond to external rewards, such as grades, recognition, or the approval of others. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated find joy in learning because of its connection with personal goals and aspirations. Setting high expectations can influence both types of motivation, but it is especially effective with the intrinsic type.

Motivation as it applies to college courses can be defined as “purposeful engagement in classroom tasks and study to master concepts or skills” (McMillan & Forsyth, 1991). Purposeful engagement is more intrinsic than extrinsic as it deals with factors inside students and within their control, especially value (what students think is important) and expectancy (what they believe they can accomplish) (Cross, 2001). When facilitators set high expectations they are communicating that they think that students are capable of significantly improved performance. In other words, if their teachers believe in them, students are more likely to believe in themselves.

In order to help students meet high expectations, it is necessary to let them experience short-term failure, because protecting students from failure dissuades them from taking risks inherent in high performance (3.1.8 Letting Students Fail So They Can Succeed). Once students are challenged to meet high expectations, they need clear performance criteria and performance measures to assess their progress (4.1.7 Writing Performance Criteria for Individuals and Teams). Setting high expectations is more than “tough love”; it is a motivational technique for helping students become less risk-averse in their learning. The process of setting high expectations begins with a supportive learning environment and involves three-way collaboration among faculty, students, and peers.

Role of the Learning Environment

Teachers need to ensure that the overall environment is supportive and non-threatening in order to encourage students to take risks, turn short-term failure into long-term success, and grow their learning ability. Before articulating high expectations, facilitators need to create a welcoming learning environment that communicates trust and respect; then students are more likely to respond more positively to high expectations (3.1.4 Establishing Initial Respect Without Prejudging, 3.1.5 Getting Student Buy-In, and 3.1.6 Obtaining Shared Commitment). Shared commitment gained from a learning community has a powerful influence on individual learners when strong commitment is evidenced as the norm. As the entire community raises its level of performance in order to meet expectations, the challenges that participants are willing to undertake increase accordingly.

Role of a Long-Term Vision

It is uplifting to link participant expectations to long-term behaviors at the end of a degree program or in professional practice. When framed in this manner, course expectations are not compartmentalized; instead they are seen as authentic challenges that are an integral part of personal and professional development. Teachers can help students envision long-term performance using professional profiles (2.4.3 Development and Use of an Expert Profile). The key is to encourage students to identify the short-term and intermediate steps necessary to meet elevated expectations. An effective technique is to ask students to think carefully about how much they will need to know in order to perform well in their jobs five years after graduation. Specifically, they should envision how much will have been learned on the job and how much they will have learned in college. The purpose of this question is to convince students that their primary job in college is to learn how to learn. This helps them value the development of learning skills and strengthens the belief that one’s learning ability is not static, but that it can be significantly increased.
Role of Facilitators

Creation of the learning environment and early interactions with students are key responsibilities of faculty. McKeachie and Svinicki have observed that the same students may be highly motivated in one course and completely disengaged in another, depending on whether they value the content and expect to succeed. Students benefit when instructors have high expectations for success and also provide the conditions for achieving it (4.1.5 Moving Toward an Assessment Culture).

It can be tempting for faculty to lower class expectations and outcomes so that almost all students can meet the minimum requirements (4.3.5 Differentiating Growth from Acquiescence). The solution to student disengagement is not to enable the avoidance of high performance endeavors, but to promote a culture of accountability and empowerment (4.3.4 The Accelerator Model). It is important for an instructor to truly believe that all students are capable of meeting high expectations and to communicate that belief to students.

A number of useful tools and techniques for realizing high expectations are summarized below:

- Choose classroom activities that are demanding, but that also have clear expectations for performance
- Provide a mechanism by which students can calculate their grades and measure progress in the course
- Link high classroom standards with long-term personal and professional behaviors that will be beneficial in future classes and beyond college
- Communicate the importance of high standards as they relate to performance in “the real world” of professional standards (Commission on Accountability in Higher Education, 2005)
- Envision yourself as a student in your class and ask yourself which course expectations and structures for meeting these expectations might be perceived as unrealistic
- Don’t let students convince you to lower standards by one of the following
  - Delay tactics
  - Lobbying to eliminate portions of assignments
  - Demanding examples of previous exam problems
  - Using office hours to have you set up or simplify problems
  - Asking for answers so that they can avoid thinking critically

- Illustrate that you “walk the talk” of high expectations by making students aware of new professional challenges you are facing and undertaking in your teaching

Concluding Thoughts

High expectations must not exist in a vacuum; they are an integral part of a larger learning environment that is solidified at the beginning of a learning experience. Student performance is significantly affected by how we communicate expectations for performance and how we communicate confidence that conditions for success exist in our classrooms. In general, students will perform to the level of their own, their peers’, and their professors’ expectations. We encourage the reader to be mindful of the groundwork associated with earlier steps in the Methodology for Creating a Quality Learning Environment (3.1.3) and to explore techniques outlined in this module as a means of motivating new levels of student performance.

References


Creating a quality learning environment must include the opportunity for students to experience temporary failure on the road to success. Failure in academe is typically associated with students who perform poorly and do not understand the material presented in college classrooms. This module attempts to demystify the concept of failure in the learning environment and illustrates how failure, when managed appropriately by faculty, can be a catalyst for the growth, development, and improved performance of the adult learner. This module begins with a definition of tough love, it examines some issues that faculty face in practicing it, and suggests several techniques to assist faculty as they encourage students to take risks and learn from failure.

**What is Tough Love?**

The concept of tough love is typically associated with a child-rearing practice whereby parents purposely limit their child’s freedoms and privileges so that the child will experience the angst associated with “growing up.” Tough love attempts to build accountability and responsibility in children for the decisions that they make. Because faculty may lack candor and honesty in dealing with students’ poor classroom performance, they need to practice a similar tough-love strategy and hold students accountable for all facets of their learning (Fram & Pearse, 2000). This approach shifts to students the responsibility for their own growth and accomplishment, and it helps them build confidence in their performance (*3.2.2 Profile of a Quality Facilitator*).

Just as tough-love parents protect the child from unsafe situations, faculty should set boundaries determining which types of failure can be tolerated and which must be avoided. For example, faculty should not permit serious physical or emotional harm when letting students fail. Also, when students are working in project teams, failure of one individual, while it may help him or her grow, could have negative consequences for other team members and for the project sponsor.

In addition to setting boundaries, faculty must set high expectations. Like athletic performance, academic performance requires expectations that challenge students to move somewhat beyond their comfort zone. If a high jumper successfully clears a height of six feet and two inches, raising the bar to a height of six feet and six inches would motivate this athlete to improve his or her performance. High academic performance also entails establishing clear expectations of performance at a level well beyond a student’s comfort zone (*4.3.4 The Accelerator Model*). For example, requiring students to learn an unfamiliar software program on their own creates an expectation that is challenging to an uncomfortable degree.

Mediocre performance in a tough-love classroom is not acceptable when an individual is capable of operating at a higher level. Faculty should challenge “average” performance from students who could perform better; they should have students reflect on the causes of their sub-optimal work and seek guidance toward improving future outcomes.

**What Does Failure Really Mean?**

Research suggests that experiencing failure can result in a wide range of subsequent behaviors (Burnstein, 2000). Like punishment, failure can have strong negative consequences. For example, failure stimulates students’ tendencies toward risk aversion, avoiding the areas in which they have failed so that they do not appear to be foolish or inadequate. Bandura (1997) posits that repeated performance failure, especially failure that occurs early in the course of events, lowers a student’s self-efficacy; he defines self-efficacy as judgment about one’s own capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to attain desired performance. In order to facilitate student growth and improved performance, faculty need to effectively manage student failure. If faculty do not manage failure; if they instead let students fail without adequately assessing their performance and without giving them the opportunity to rectify the poor outcome, students can attribute their poor performance to external factors like task difficulty, poor teachers, and unfair grading techniques (Noel, Forsyth, & Kelley, 1987). When students attribute poor performance to external factors beyond their perceived control, they experience decreased motivation, lack of goal directedness, and negative expectations of future performance.

When it is well managed, however, short-term failure can have positive results, leading to long-term goal directedness and improved self-efficacy. The affective dissonance associated with short-term failure can be used as a catalyst to improve subsequent performances. When performance failures occur, faculty should help students develop short-term goals and explore the need for increased effort; they should coach students on the benefits of perseverance and commitment to the learning process. When students engage in metacognition and explore and
discuss the causes of their failure, they become able to use learning resources more effectively, they process information at a deeper level, and they devise strategies to more effectively monitor their future performance (Nietfeld, Cao, & Osborne, 2005).

The Role of Failure in Creating a Quality Learning Environment

This module is designed to help implement Step 5 of the Methodology for Creating a Quality Learning Environment (3.1.3). Step 4 in this methodology is fostering and supporting risk taking while Step 6 is setting high expectations for students. Permitting the learner to fail establishes the link between these steps; when students see that short-term failure leads to long-term success, they are encouraged to take risks.

Faculty will only be able to set high expectations, however, if they are comfortable addressing short-term failure through a philosophy of tough love. Faculty who adopt a tough-love philosophy offer students explicit and frequent feedback, thus providing affirmation that the students have potential for growth (Griffin, Combs, Land, & Combs, 1983). When faculty encourage students to take risks and reward them for it, they enhance student self-efficacy: students become better able to judge their own abilities to organize and execute the courses of action that are necessary for them to reach their desired goals.

Academic goals that are specific and challenging will contribute to higher levels of task performance if two conditions are present: the goals must be achievable, and students must be committed to reaching them (Spieker, & Hinsz, 2004). Given the complexity of life today and the significant demands it places on college students, it is vital that instructors set achievable short-term and intermediate goals to which students can commit. Research suggests that establishing realistic and achievable short-term goals will improve student self-esteem in the college environment, even for new students who tend to be overanxious and avoid the risk of making mistakes (Michie, Glachan, & Bray, 2001). If students can celebrate the achievement of short-term goals and not lose sight of the overall desired performance, it is more likely that their performance will continue to improve.

The degree of commitment to academic achievement is a key ingredient for reaching future goals. Typically, those who lack a sense of commitment will be easily discouraged and will try to withdraw from further attempts at a task. Self-efficacy may be the crucial component in predicting levels of performance. When students engage in an academic performance, even if the performance expectation is well beyond their perceived attainment, students who have positive self-efficacy are more likely to persevere and complete the task than are students whose self-efficacy is low due to repeated academic failures. With encouragement, support, and a non-judgmental approach by faculty, students can realize that failing at a task means only that they have not succeeded yet, and that they need to increase effort when they attempt the task in the future. Burnstein’s (2000) research suggests that setting more difficult goals after academic failure can trigger increased effort, thereby improving task performance; however, this can only occur if the failure is treated as a growth opportunity.

Issues Associated with the Successful Implementation of Tough Love

The following issues highlight critical areas in which faculty can grow to avoid enabling mediocre academic outcomes and ensure that students are accountable for their own performance.

• Having personal and emotional toughness

It is a human tendency to want to step in when a student begins to experience failure. Typically, faculty will not let the student experience the full phenomenon of the moment, but will intervene with a content-related strategy to assist a student in improving performance. This behavior is contrary to a tough-love approach and must be resisted. Allowing students to feel the full cognitive and affective experience of failure is necessary if they are to grow and develop skills to successfully handle similar tasks in the future.

• Not allowing students to quit

Once students are faced with failure they tend to quit. When failing students are not effectively coached, students become frustrated, faculty alienate themselves from students, and retention suffers. If students feel they are not supported, or if they feel embarrassed when they do not meet academic expectations, absenteeism will also become more pronounced. If faculty express a strong belief in a student’s ability to succeed, if they encourage students to take risks, experience failure, and develop successful learning strategies, it will enhance students’ commitment to try again.

• Sharing experiences of failure

Faculty must be empathetic when students fail. This does not mean that they should “feel sorry” for students who fail; instead they need to realize that they themselves have also experienced failure. When faculty reflect upon their own academic failures and poor performance, they can then share those experiences with students. As a result, students are encouraged to persevere.
• **Allowing students to experience frustration**

Faculty must also gain the confidence necessary to allow students to feel uneasy in the classroom and not to immediately intervene when this happens. New faculty members are particularly susceptible to the temptation to intervene immediately when students are failing in order to preclude negative student reactions. Although it is often uncomfortable for faculty to remain silent during a failed student performance, doing so provides the student with the full affective and social experience.

• **Experiencing failure in small steps**

Setting high expectations and allowing students to fail in incremental steps will actually build trust and commitment between the faculty member and his or her students. Small failures are more easily coached and will allow for immediate feedback on specific areas of performance. Coaching students through various stages of performance will improve their self-efficacy and will allow them to make necessary course corrections to be successful. This will also improve the students’ confidence and emotional resilience when failure occurs in the future.

• **Avoiding enabling behavior**

Faculty must recognize the difference between coaching behaviors that allow for growth and enabling behaviors that produce dependency. One may provide temporary success by overlooking or acquiescing to poor or low-quality performance or by assisting students with task performance, but these behaviors will eventually lead to students not reaching their full potential.  

• **Questioning instructor performance**

To facilitate student growth, it is essential to set high expectations for performance on new and challenging subject matter; but when students begin to experience short-term failure, faculty typically question their own teaching skills. Faculty must recognize that it is not necessarily a reflection on their ability to teach effectively when they allow students to fail in their first attempt at a new academic performance. If expectations are set at the appropriate level for growth, the majority of students will experience short-term failure throughout the learning process.

• **Using peer interaction**

College provides an opportunity for students to grow in the social domain. Relating to others, developing communications skills, and performing on a team are key areas of growth for students. Peer modeling and the social comparison of one student’s performance against the performance of other students are rich sources of feedback for students who have recently experienced failure. If classmates are willing to discuss their own sub-standard performances with each other, they may become more resilient and will engage in similar tasks more readily. Faculty can help facilitate this process by planning challenging cooperative activities during which group interaction can help mitigate the consequences of failure. If tough love is shared proportionally in a group activity, individuals will perform to a higher standard due to the synergistic effect of the group.

• **Providing feedback**

Continuous and immediate feedback can also assist faculty in instituting a tough-love strategy for student performance. Faculty, however, should not be the only source for providing appropriate feedback on failed performance. Peer review can be used to generate encouragement and commitment to difficult tasks. Peer feedback is often less threatening than faculty feedback; it motivates students to take necessary risks and to try new methods. A student may be more willing to accept constructive criticism from a classmate because of the perception that the classmate has probably experienced the same type of risk and failure.

**Concluding Thoughts**

Failure in today’s college environment is typically seen as a grade or evaluation after the conclusion of a specific course: it is associated with students not being able to “cut the mustard.” Too often students are surprised to find themselves faced with a choice of abandoning a major or repeating an entire class, with little additional feedback. This module gives tips for turning failure within the classroom environment into an opportunity for growth and performance improvement. This module cautions faculty against enabling students by allowing mediocre performance to persist. Student success must be earned: it is not an entitlement. Therefore, it is important for faculty to adopt both sides of tough love; being willing to set high expectations, but also being willing to foster learning environments that are growth-oriented and nonjudgmental.
References


Facilitating Success

Profile of a Quality Facilitator

Facilitation Methodology

Reasons Instructors are Successful/Unsuccessful in Facilitating Student Success

*Faculty Guidebook* 3.2.7 Constructive Intervention

*Faculty Guidebook* 3.2.8 Constructive Intervention Techniques

Activity: Reflection on Successful Constructive Interventions in this Workshop

*Faculty Guidebook* 3.2.5 Creating a Facilitation Plan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Profile of a High-Quality Facilitator</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develops resources for multiple scripts/tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Designs strong structures through a facilitation plan, a road map</td>
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<td>• Predicts the major issues that must be addressed including what “done” looks like</td>
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<td>• Prepares background conceptual knowledge</td>
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<td>• Defines metrics for project success, such as cost, schedule, performance, or quality</td>
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<td><strong>Assessing audience needs</strong></td>
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<td>• Affirms what each brings to the table</td>
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<td>• Discovers major issues people are confronting</td>
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<td>• Seeks out the outcomes for each person</td>
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<td>• Identifies collective outcomes</td>
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<td>• Clearly predicts and verifies everyone’s role in moving along the road map</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Setup</strong></td>
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<td>• Clarifies expectations</td>
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<td>• Creates a framework for the process; describes the road map and major milestones</td>
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<td>• Establishes teams</td>
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<td>• Motivates individuals for the experience</td>
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<td>• Performs risk assessment and predefines risk management</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitating experience</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Constantly transfers ownership to participants</td>
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<td>• Actively assesses progress of individuals and teams</td>
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<td>• Constructively intervenes on process issues, not content</td>
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<td>• Continuously raises the bar to challenge participants</td>
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<td>• Monitors objective metrics and actively acts on data to ensure success</td>
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<td><strong>Closure</strong></td>
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<td>• Stops activity at the top of the production curve</td>
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<td>• Requests each team representative to summarize issues, good and bad</td>
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<td>• Does a perception check for consensus within each team</td>
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<td>• Makes sure that each issue has an owner and due date to ensure resolution</td>
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<td>• Insists on SII Assessment of learning processes</td>
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<td><strong>Follow-up</strong></td>
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<td>• Makes sure team members achieve individual/collective outcomes</td>
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<td>• Accepts constructive criticism and promises action toward improvement</td>
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<td>• Ensures that all data is collected for participant reflection</td>
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<td>• Reinforces negative and positive issues as equally important</td>
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<td>• Clarifies the next step in the process</td>
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Discussion of the Methodology (from FGB 3.2.3 Facilitation Methodology)

Note that Steps 1-3 should be done prior to the event. Step 4 should be done either before or at the start of the event. Steps 5-11 should be done during the event and Step 12 should be done after the event.

**Step 1—Define the key measurable outcomes.**

This step is absolutely essential and the one most often omitted. When defining these measurable outcomes (two or three are sufficient), assess what your students need most in order to improve their learning performance. Avoid “over-scoping” what can be accomplished in the given time frame. Outcome-based learning is a very popular concept in higher education today, because if teaching cannot be assessed against a set of outcomes, its effectiveness cannot be measured, and therefore it cannot be improved (Astin, 1985).

**Step 2—Design and prepare for every activity.**

At this stage one must choose an activity that will help achieve the learning outcomes from Step 1. It is important to think carefully about what the designer of the activity was trying to accomplish. Be sure to plan for contingencies that may arise during the facilitation. What individual or team behaviors are expected? Determine which two or three learning skills will be focused on and assessed during the activity. Make sure the activity resources can be provided.

**Step 3—Decide which strategies, processes, and tools are appropriate for each specific activity, including the roles for participants.**

In this step the facilitator must decide what activity format is best suited to engage the participants based on the activity content and meeting the outcomes of the activity. It is best to incorporate at least ten different activity formats during a semester to ensure student involvement, which research (Angelo
& Cross, 1993) has shown to be critical to student growth. Note that student-faculty and student-peer involvement have positive correlations with every area of student intellectual and personal growth (Astin, 2001).

**Step 4—Pre-assess to determine participants' readiness.**

To ensure that all participants are sufficiently prepared to perform well during the activity, it is important to determine their level of preparation and the extent of their prior knowledge about the activity content. This can be accomplished in a number of ways: a quiz, a short written assignment in which they discuss what they know or have learned from their preparation, a set of questions each has prepared from the pre-event reading, or the answers to assigned study questions.

**Step 5—Set up each specific activity.**

This is another highly critical step during which the facilitator ensures that participants know why they are doing the activity, and that they understand the learning objectives, performance criteria, resources, and general tasks for the activity. Performance criteria should be set in terms of both process and content. It is important that each participant know exactly what is expected, but the facilitator must be careful not to usurp responsibility for the learning by each participant. The extent of the setup also depends on the activity type, from discovery learning, which requires minimal content setup, to lecture, which involves extensive content description and is influenced by the personality of the facilitator. If the use of team roles is required, this is the point at which the facilitator ensures that each team member has a role to play.

**Step 6—Release individuals/teams to pursue the activity.**

Here we give control to the participants to start working on the activity and strive to promote learner ownership. In other words, participants should feel in control of the quality of their performance and the outcomes they produce. The first order of business for the teams is to set up a plan if one is not already provided in the activity description. One of the resources should always be the amount of time reserved for the activity.

**Step 7—Assess team and individual performances**

This step involves gathering information by listening to and observing the dynamics between individuals, based on verbal interchanges and body language, and written documentation from the activity; the Recorder’s Report gives clues as to how well the participants are learning the content. The goal is to foster independent learning. Therefore, it is important to plan in advance, identifying the top three to five issues affecting performance. Link these issues with specific learning skills that can be improved and the outcomes from Step 1.

**Step 8—Provide constructive interventions based on process, not content.**

During this step, the facilitator uses the data collected during the last step to determine when to intervene, but avoids doing things for participants that they could do themselves, even if it may be the easiest way to remedy the situation. By making it harder to get information from the facilitator and by replying with questions rather than direct answers, you encourage participants to use and develop their information processing and critical thinking skills. Be careful not to intervene unless a team asks for help, because unwanted interventions can disrupt the flow of the team and even cause people to resent of the facilitator. When making an intervention, facilitators should focus on helping participants address the skill or process that is lacking rather than focusing completely on the content. Examples
of appropriate times for an intervention include intervening after an extended period of struggling or frustration, when participants’ actions stray too far from meeting the performance criteria for the activity, or when there is a complete breakdown in performance (Apple, Duncan-Hewitt, Krumsieg, & Mount, 2000).

**Step 9—Bring all the individuals and/or teams back together at the conclusion of the activity.**

This is not easy because teams work at different speeds. It may be necessary to assign enrichment exercises to some teams and stop others before they have fully completed the activity.

**Step 10—Provide closure with the sharing of collective results.**

This is a vitally important step and should not be skipped, even when time is short because participants need feedback. Have the teams share quality performances that others can benefit from as well as areas where performance needs improvement. Identify star performances and areas that need more discussion and discovery. Summarize what has happened and what has been learned, but do not spend time on what participants already know. Challenge them to articulate their discoveries at higher levels of knowledge beyond facts and information.

**Step 11—Use various SII Assessments to provide feedback on how to improve everyone’s performance.**

Realize that participants want SII Assessment feedback based on the activity performance criteria that will help them improve future performance. Make regular use of oral Reflectors’ Reports.

**Step 12—Plan for follow-up activities.**

The written team products should be assessed and returned with comments to each team at the next class. If some points need clarification, a quiz or further discussion may be employed. The facilitator should assess his or her own performance, striving for continual improvement. If the performance was peer coached, the facilitator and peer coach should meet after the facilitation for a mentoring session.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons instructors are successful in facilitating student success</th>
<th>Reasons instructors are unsuccessful in facilitating student success</th>
<th>Reasons for student’s success</th>
<th>Reasons for student’s failure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack skills beyond subject area</td>
<td>Come in with strong skill set</td>
<td>Lack of basic skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective communication skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication disconnect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelming workload</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of support structure for those motivated but missing needed skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong tool set to teach diverse learning needs</td>
<td>Diversity of learning needs within a course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Size of class and number of students taught per term</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design curriculum so the students learn</td>
<td>Lack of time to design curriculum</td>
<td>Lack of organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections made with students/ connecting the subject area and the students</td>
<td>Connections not made with students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to match teaching to learning needs</td>
<td>Come in with a strong prerequisite knowledge foundation</td>
<td>Lack of prerequisite knowledge</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bound by bureaucracy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Risk-taker/use failures as learning experiences</td>
<td>Culture punishes risk-taking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Help students learn from their failures</td>
<td>Need to be loved by students</td>
<td>Fear of failure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of institutional/societal support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of support structure for those motivated but missing needed skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to feedback/practice SII Assessment within class</td>
<td>Lack of continuous SII Assessment</td>
<td>Don’t see teachers as mentors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate students by various means</td>
<td>Lack of tools to motivate students</td>
<td>Highly motivated</td>
<td>Lack of motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to change/seek out feedback from both students and other instructors</td>
<td>Unwillingness to change</td>
<td>Respect of others</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of time to explore</td>
<td></td>
<td>Put school as a priority with time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Too many interruptions to instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for student's success</td>
<td>Reasons for student's failure</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reasons instructors are successful in facilitating student success</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reasons instructors are unsuccessful in facilitating student success</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring attitude without enabling</td>
<td>Being judgmental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Expect success/believe in your students</td>
<td>Too many under-motivated, under-prepared, under-performing students/lack of student responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear expectations</td>
<td>Unrealistic or absent goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strives for buy-in by students/high student involvement and engagement/modeling learning in failure</td>
<td>Too faculty centered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Love to learn/dedicated and committed</td>
<td>Teacher burnout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping each student succeed to beyond his/her expectations</td>
<td>Mismatch of student performance expectations</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking the responsibility for “teaching” failures rather than always defining as “learning” failures</td>
<td>Lack of self-assessment of teaching skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of reflection</td>
<td>Respond to failure effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High engagement within community</td>
<td>Lack of credibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make use of peers</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creates a safe learning environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging personality</td>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of humor including about yourself</td>
<td>Are optimistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepts responsibility of student success within reason</td>
<td>Produce strong effort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Timely feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorporating the family to support the learning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Negative feedback from teachers
- Don’t see the relevance to their life
- Set goals and work toward fulfilling them
- Lack of role models
- Lack of challenging oneself
- Respond to failure ineffectively
- Poor self-assessment skills
- Peer pressure/lack of family support
- Low self-esteem
- Confuse effort with performance/lack of effort
- Sense of humor including about yourself
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons instructors are successful in facilitating student success</th>
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<th>Reasons for student’s success</th>
<th>Reasons for student’s failure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have cultural awareness</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Constantly seeking solutions for unresolved problems</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer students choices</td>
<td>Conscious of learning strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned trust between instructor and students</td>
<td>Respect of teachers’ role in learning</td>
<td>Too much enabling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High attendance</td>
<td>Low attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion for what s/he is teaching</td>
<td>Strong interest in the subject</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of maturity</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Undiagnosed learning disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of mandatory assessment leading to mismatch of skill set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good self-assessment skills</td>
<td>Poor self-assessment skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>Better to look lazy than stupid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poor self-assessment skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Constructive interventions are used by educators to strengthen process skills. A focus on learner process skills is a stronger way to produce growth than the traditional emphasis on clarifying disciplinary knowledge. This module addresses several aspects of constructive intervention including theory, the “intervention cycle,” principles, and critical issues. It also profiles the conditions that indicate metacognitive understanding of intervention strategies; this will help educators elevate their skills in using constructive intervention. An accompanying module includes more detailed information and insights about actual constructive intervention techniques and the contexts in which they are useful. Authentic growth in the use of constructive intervention requires knowledge both of the basic principles and practice that is assessed in real-time.

### What is Constructive Intervention?

Constructive intervention refers to a pattern of facilitator skills designed to guide learner growth. There is a wide range of techniques and insights for improving interventions (3.2.8 Constructive Intervention Techniques), all of which depend initially upon observation, listening, and information gathering. This initial work enables a facilitator to assess what learners are doing and how well they are oriented to the goal of improving performance in a process. Sound assessment data will enable the facilitator to decide whether to intervene and, if necessary, how to intervene. Later, assessment of changes in performance will indicate whether the intervention worked and allow one to estimate what additional interventions may be useful. "Constructive" is used both in the sense of providing positive assessment feedback and in the sense of helping learners to elevate and expand their learning skills, i.e., to construct better skills through reflective practice.

### Theory and Research

The term “intervention” is found in many contexts including counseling, education, training, and management. Interventions are used when there is a need to improve processes related to important outcomes by influencing adjustment, level of knowledge, productivity, or quality of products or services. Adding the word “constructive” emphasizes that intervening in a process may not be beneficial if it is done without an understanding of “limiting skills,” i.e., those skills most essential for effectively performing the processes involved in achieving a desired outcome.

Research from counseling and applied psychology indicates some of the factors that influence “buy-in” of constructive interventions. Oetzel and Scherer (2003) examined how therapists for adolescents achieved “engagement” with these frequently resistant and challenging clients. Interventions that worked best were described as empathic, genuine, and developmentally appropriate. They allowed choices and helped adolescents deal with the stigma of being in treatment for mental adjustment problems. Lieb and Kanofsky (2003) argue that the important criteria for determining whether interventions will be accepted and useful are sensitivity to cultural and intergenerational issues, attention to language, and focus on life stories. When the client and the counselor collaborate well together, both benefit as evidenced by increased ability to construct “mastery stories” that are useful for guiding future behavior.

Constructive interventions start with an intention to influence a process or a learning skill. To analyze leadership strategies Stockton, Morran, and Clark (2004) had group leaders list their “intentions” for a series of interventions presented via videotapes of therapy sessions. These researchers were interested in understanding the “self talk” of team leaders, rather than cognitive style and other more “stable” variables that earlier researchers had attended to. Among the categories of intention found by Stockton et al. (2004) were gathering information and assessing members, challenging members, attending to and validating members, directing self, directing the group, and promoting connections and interactions. One implication of this research for educators is the use of reflective journaling to increase consciousness of internal speech that correlates with the selection of intervention targets and techniques.

Bottger and Yetton’s (1987) research supports the significance of well-designed activities, adequate prerequisite knowledge resources, and assessment of specific skills in creating a stronger performance environment. For example, they found that providing information ahead of time about poor but commonly used decision-making methods produced improvements in group problem solving.

### The Constructive Intervention “Cycle”

Effective use of constructive intervention typically involves a “cycle of intervention” that includes careful curriculum design and preparation of a detailed facilitation plan (3.2.5 Creating a Facilitation Plan). It is difficult
to provide effective constructive intervention unless one understands, ahead of time, what is likely to be important. A brief overview is provided here of the typical cycle; more information and examples are provided in the accompanying module 3.2.8 Constructive Intervention Techniques.

1. **Prepare the context**—Preparation of well-designed course activities that support course and program objectives will make it possible to recognize opportunities for interventions.

2. **Spot the growth opportunity**—Knowing what learning skills are likely to limit the level of learning prepares the facilitator for observing signs of problems due to the deficient skills. It is essential, in real time, to “skim” a room to notice general problems such as whether some team members are trying to work without a plan or are being dominated by one member. Noticing a problem initiates Step 3.

3. **Identify a limiting skill**—It is important to quickly estimate what is the most significant skill needed for the context. In a team context, failure of members to argue for their positions may indicate lack of preparation (which could be due to insufficient resources in the curriculum) or a need to improve the skill of persuasively arguing a position—an essential learning skill. The classification of skills provides the facilitator with recognized labels for specific skills.

4. **Decide on learner readiness**—Learning skills exist at various levels; intervention at too high or too low a level will reduce effectiveness. For example, if a learner is persuasive only if he or she emotionally engaged by an issue (“unconscious use” of a learning skill), an intervention might be to ask why and how a previous argument was persuasive (i.e., elevate growth to “conscious use”).

5. **Choose an intervention**—Depending on learner readiness and the context, the intervention must address the performance issue by guiding the learner to self-assess current performance. The principles of constructive intervention (next section) provide guidelines for making effective choices.

6. **Implement the intervention**—Judgments about frustration level (e.g., whether to intervene immediately when a performance issue is observed or after a period of frustration), technique (Table 1 in 3.2.8 Constructive Intervention Techniques), mode (e.g., whether the intervention should be verbal or nonverbal), and timing (e.g., whether the intervention is needed during the activity or could be addressed later) are all relevant and must be made in real time.

7. **Assess the results**—Observations, review of documents, and learning journals are useful ways to assess whether an intervention produced the intended effects. This is essential for elevating facilitation skills as well as learner performance.

8. **Decide on follow-up actions**—Continuity from one constructive intervention opportunity to the next requires that a facilitator be consistent in addressing learning skills until they actually improve and to be aware of the next step of growth for an individual so new interventions build on previous ones.

**Constructive Intervention Principles**

The ten principles in Table 1 underlie the theory and practice of constructive intervention. By internalizing and committing to these principles, educators will become more proficient at fostering learner growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Ten Principles of Constructive Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Constructive intervention is the focused assessment of essential skills needed for performance mastery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Accelerator Model (4.3.4) can be used to guide the level of affective challenge of constructive interventions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Facilitation success can be enhanced by identifying target skills, their triggering scenarios, and standards of performance in the facilitation plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Facilitator attention to verbal and nonverbal cues from learners will be enhanced by the planning of potentially useful interventions.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Constructive interventions must be used sparingly to avoid causing disruptions and negative affective reactions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. The level of learner openness, i.e., buy-in, to constructive intervention must be facilitated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Constructive intervention can be used to redirect learner attention or to challenge the level of performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Requesting self-assessment as a constructive intervention will enhance learners’ consciousness of their levels of competency.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Metacognitive understanding of levels of quality in the uses of constructive interventions is enhanced by articulating “mastery stories” for various contexts.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. Constructive intervention is focused assessment of essential skills needed for performance mastery.

To be effective facilitators must be able to identify the skill(s) needed by teams or individuals in specific learning activities or contexts. Articulation of the names of these skills is available for over 250 specific learning skills in four domains (cognitive, social, affective, and psychomotor). To be effective, a facilitator should focus on only one or two key skills in a given performance and then constructively intervene to strengthen these.

2. The Accelerator Model can be used to guide the level of affective challenge in constructive interventions.

The affective domain, which contains skills involving value development, personal development, and aesthetic development, is a major source of learning skills that can be targeted by means of constructive intervention. Mastering these skills widens a learner’s “comfort zone,” (4.3.4 The Accelerator Model) so that the degree of challenge slightly exceeds the learner’s skill set.

3. Facilitation success can be enhanced by identifying target skills, triggering scenarios, and standards of performance in the facilitation plan.

The more planning that can be done before facilitating an activity, the more comfortable the educator will be conducting interventions and the more successful these interventions will be (3.2.5 Creating a Facilitation Plan). Empathically putting oneself in the place of the student lacking a key skill will help one to anticipate the behavior and associated feelings, to focus attention on how to observe and assess the performance, and to provide insights about how to plan an intervention and follow-through that will “grow the skill.”

4. Facilitator attention to verbal and nonverbal cues from learners will be enhanced by the planning of potentially useful interventions.

The facilitator must collect information from written reports as well as verbal and nonverbal cues, making strong use of observation and listening skills. Having potential interventions in mind from preparation of a detailed facilitation plan is a powerful way to maintain full control of the constructive intervention process.

5. Constructive interventions must be used sparingly to avoid causing disruptions and negative affective reactions.

A common mistake of an inexperienced facilitator of team activities is to intervene unnecessarily. Every intervention disrupts the flow of the group. See 3.2.2 Profile of a Quality Facilitator for a detailed description of behaviors relevant to constructive intervention and a rubric for levels of facilitator effectiveness.

6. The level of learner openness to constructive intervention must be facilitated.

See 3.1.1 Overview of Quality Learning Environments for principles of how to achieve a learning environment in which the learners respect each other and the educator and in which resources and opportunities are provided to meet clear and challenging learning goals.

7. Constructive intervention can be used to redirect learner attention or to challenge the level of performance.

Because the intent of constructive interventions is growth of learning skills or processes (2.3.8 Learning Process Methodology), it is essential to continuously assess the level of a few central, i.e., “limiting,” skills needed in activities being facilitated. See 2.3.3 Classification of Learning Skills for a rubric to assess the level of use of specific learning skills through five levels: non-conscious use, conscious use, consistent performance, self-reflective use, and transformative use.

8. Requesting self-assessment as a constructive intervention will enhance learners’ consciousness of their levels of competency.

Until learners become proficient in the process of self-assessment, they will remain dependent on external sources of feedback. Often a simple request to write a self-assessment will produce growth in specific learning skills by encouraging increased consciousness of how the skill is being performed.


The best assessment of constructive intervention skills will come from a peer coach who is not immersed in the process as are the facilitator and learners. It is important to specify for the coach, by sharing these details from the facilitation plan, what learner skills are being assessed and what constructive intervention techniques are planned. Peer coaching may occur within a broader mentoring relationship (4.2.3 Personal Development Methodology and 4.2.1 Overview of Mentoring).

10. Metacognitive understanding of levels of quality in the uses of constructive intervention is enhanced by articulating “mastery stories” for various contexts.

The facilitation rubric describes skills at five qualitatively different levels, including ranger, manager, director, coach, and change agent. A strategy for improving as a reflective practitioner is keeping a journal with stories, cases, and personal narratives about specific ways to successfully provide constructive interventions.
Effective Use of Constructive Intervention

Growth effects from using constructive intervention become increasingly predictable when educators are prepared, learners have bought in, and follow-through occurs consistently. The following outline provides a summary of the main factors involved from the educator perspective.

1. Preparation
   a. Curriculum design specifications are sound and well focused (2.4.6 Methodology for Program Design).
   b. Activities (well-focused assignments or tasks) provide opportunities that require learners to use new skills or to advance skills to new levels (2.4.8 Methodology for Course Design).
   c. A detailed facilitation plan is written that predicts many of the learner areas for improvement and includes intervention techniques.
   d. Learner buy-in for receiving and using assessment has been achieved (3.1.5 Getting Student Buy-In).
   e. Assessment information is available on the main “limiting” skills expected to be in need of improvement in the current context.

2. Essential Behaviors and Attitudes
   a. Focus must be on processes and learning skills, not on content (4.1.3 Mindset for Assessment).
   b. Focus of attention must shift flexibly among the larger contexts (e.g., skimming the whole classroom to assess current status), the teams, and the individuals to identify key learning barriers and issues.
   c. Relationships with assessees must be positive by focusing on strengths first but also by providing clear assessment information for improvement.
   d. Constructive interventions must facilitate mental independence and support active learning.
   e. Interventions must influence elevation of learning skills or processes to the next level feasible for the team or individual.

3. Follow-Through Strategies
   a. Assess growth trends of teams and individuals over time.
   b. Plan opportunities to apply, transfer, and generalize learning skills and processes.
   c. Facilitate learner skills in self-assessing performances so they can constructively intervene for themselves or for others without external facilitation.
   d. Continuously improve learning opportunities at activity, course, and program levels.
   e. Create experiences that include celebration of growth.
   f. Do research on learning and growth outcomes that can be shared with other educators.

Concluding Thoughts

Constructive intervention is the art of facilitating individual growth in learning skills and learning processes, i.e., in learning to learn. The theory, cycle of intervention, and major principles of constructive intervention presented in the present module help educators acquire a basic understanding while an accompanying module, 3.2.8 Constructive Intervention Techniques, provides application examples. Being ready to constructively intervene requires attention to all aspects of the learning curriculum, environment, and processes. Effective facilitators must put substantial thought into preparing their minds through detailed planning so they are able to see learner needs at both the group and individual levels. When individual growth issues arise, the facilitator with skills in using the constructive intervention cycle and techniques will be able to smoothly and effectively support learner growth.

References


Constructive intervention is the only way to facilitate transformational change in learners as they grow their process skills. This module is a complement to 3.2.7 Constructive Intervention in which the theory and principles are explained. This module focuses on applications based on the steps in the intervention cycle: preparing the context, spotting the growth opportunity, identifying a limiting skill, deciding on learner readiness, choosing an intervention, implementing the intervention, assessing the results, and deciding on follow-up actions. To illustrate the types of constructive interventions, the module presents case studies from two of the three major domains from the Classification of Learning Skills. A table classifying intervention techniques is presented and the implications of using these techniques beyond one-on-one interactions is suggested.

**Importance of Planning Constructive Interventions**

It is difficult to identify, on the spot, the critical underlying skill deficit that is impeding student performance. Therefore, facilitators must analyze ahead of time what learning skills are most essential for the upcoming performance, and in which skills students are most likely to be deficient; and plan how to intervene to help students grow these skills. See 3.2.5 Creating a Facilitation Plan for a template to guide a facilitator through this planning process.

Planning also enables the facilitator to anticipate and seize the moment when learners are most receptive to growing the skill(s) that are so lacking that they limit their performance (Davis, 1993). If a facilitator is less prepared, he or she may make the mistake of delaying in order to better identify the underlying skill and to prepare the intervention. The recipient may become so frustrated by the time the intervention occurs that he or she cannot respond appropriately.

Before presenting case studies that will help facilitators understand the planning process, it is necessary to classify the different constructive intervention techniques. Table 1 provides a “toolkit” for facilitating learning skill growth (Apple, Duncan-Hewitt, Krumsie, & Mount, 2000). See the more detailed discussion of these techniques in 3.2.9 Facilitation Tools.

**Examples of Constructive Intervention**

Two detailed examples are presented in this section to illustrate how constructive intervention for individual learning skills could occur in three different settings. The “constructive intervention cycle” described in an accompanying module (3.2.7 Constructive Intervention) is followed in each of the case illustrations.

**Example 1—Classroom Scenario**

The captain of a team needs to grow her cognitive skill of “thinking skeptically.” This skill requires the user to test conclusions against fundamental principles. The context is an activity in which the team is given the number of miles a vehicle is driven (1500), the average price of gasoline ($2), and the vehicle’s average miles per gallon (30). The team is asked to compute the cost of gasoline for the trip in the vehicle. The correct answer requires the team to divide the miles driven by miles per gallon and multiply the resulting gallons by the price per gallon.

The team has no math-savvy members and has concluded that they should divide 2 into 30 and multiply by 1500, obtaining 22,500. Team members appear to apply the skill of “identifying inconsistencies” by recognizing that this seems unreasonable, so they decide to put a decimal point after the 225, still erroneous but not as obviously so.

The facilitator has had much experience with the difficulties that students tend to have with this problem and has already identified the “thinking skeptically” skill in his facilitation plan for the activity. He notices the incorrect team reasoning while he skims the room and eavesdrops on the conversations of each team. He waits for the captain or skeptic to correct the error before intervening, but this does not happen and the team is ready to record the erroneous value. Because everyone on the team seems confused by the problem, he decides to intervene at a relatively low level: he challenges the captain to self-assess her thinking process and request an intervention. He considers, but rejects, giving a mini-lecture on working with units of measure because the other teams seem to have grasped this concept.

The facilitator asks the captain, “Are you willing to bet five dollars that your answer is correct?” The team is clearly not ready to do this. “Would you like a hint on how to assess your reasoning process?” The captain says that she would appreciate such a hint. “If you used only the units miles, dollars-per-gallon, and miles-per-gallon and conduct the same arithmetic operations that you did with the numbers 2, 30, and 1500, what would you come up with?” After a period of blank stares, someone on the team writes down the units under their numerical
computation $\frac{30}{2} \times 1500$. “What arithmetic operation does the ‘per’ in ‘miles per gallon’ or ‘dollars per gallon’ represent?” Finally, the captain works out that the units do not yield the desired answer, but she sees that if they divided “dollars per gallon” by “miles per gallon” and multiplied by “miles,” they would get “dollars.”

The facilitator asks each team reflector to prepare a verbal report about the most important thing the team has learned from the exercise, and the reflector from the above team describes the experience with the units. To make sure the whole class has understood, the facilitator rephrases the team’s discovery; “After solving a problem, it is important to think skeptically about the process and identify the principles at work.” As a follow-up activity, the facilitator decides to give a different more difficult problem, also involving units, a few days later to see if the class has internalized this cognitive skill.

Of the ten constructive intervention principles (3.2.7 Constructive Intervention), the ones at work in this example are: Facilitation success can be enhanced by identifying target skills, their triggering scenarios, and standards of performance in the facilitation plan; Constructive intervention can be used to redirect learner attention or to challenge the level of performance; and Requesting self-assessment as a constructive intervention will enhance learners’ consciousness of their levels of competency.

**Example 2—Peer Coach Scenario**

A teacher new to Process Education has asked one of his more experienced colleagues to attend a class and suggest ways in which he can improve his facilitation skills. The peer coach immediately asks the teacher to identify areas in which he would especially like her to focus her assessment. He responds that even though he prepares stimulating activities for learning the content, the students just do the bare minimum and seem to think all this team activity is a waste of time. The peer coach observes the class and it is clear that the students have not bought into the importance of learning to improve their performance. The teacher seems powerless to change this attitude and simply proceeds by rote to manage the activity.

The peer coach recognizes that the teacher needs to grow in the social domain skills cluster entitled “building and maintaining teams,” which includes the skills defining

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affirming</th>
<th>Inquiring</th>
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<th>Expediting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public recognition</td>
<td>Directed questions related to information processing</td>
<td>“Just in time” lecturing supply needed clarifying information</td>
<td>Providing an SII of team performance</td>
<td>Divergent questions related to doing research</td>
<td>Adjusting activity or assignment requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-based recognition</td>
<td>Convergent questions related to critical thinking</td>
<td>Answering consulting questions</td>
<td>Requesting self-assessment SII by students or teams</td>
<td>Identifying students to serve as consultants to other teams</td>
<td>Providing resources books, websites, handouts, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining the group sit down and listen only</td>
<td>Allowing students to ask consulting questions</td>
<td>Using student consultants to help a struggling team</td>
<td>Requesting SII of facilitation from students</td>
<td>Raising the bar increase performance criteria</td>
<td>Refocusing questions to get teams back on track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevating a question (2.2.1 Bloom’s Taxonomy—Expanding its Meaning)</td>
<td>Parallel reporting e.g., all spokespersons go to the board</td>
<td>Doing midterm assessments regularly</td>
<td>Using venting session to deal with affective issues</td>
<td>Changing performance criteria to manage frustration</td>
<td>Adjusting time constraints when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying a question rephrase it</td>
<td>Sending spies to eavesdrop on other teams</td>
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Table 1

**Classification of Constructive Intervention Techniques**

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<th>Affirming</th>
<th>Inquiring</th>
<th>Infusing</th>
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| Evidence-based recognition       | Convergent questions related to critical thinking | Answering consulting questions | Requesting self-assessment SII by students or teams | Identifying students to serve as consultants to other teams | Providing resources books, websites, handouts, etc. |
| Joining the group sit down and listen only | Allowing students to ask consulting questions | Using student consultants to help a struggling team | Requesting SII of facilitation from students | Raising the bar increase performance criteria | Refocusing questions to get teams back on track |
| Elevating a question (2.2.1 Bloom’s Taxonomy—Expanding its Meaning) | Parallel reporting e.g., all spokespersons go to the board | Doing midterm assessments regularly | Using venting session to deal with affective issues | Changing performance criteria to manage frustration | Adjusting time constraints when needed |
| Clarifying a question rephrase it | Sending spies to eavesdrop on other teams | | | | |

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| Evidence-based recognition       | Convergent questions related to critical thinking | Answering consulting questions | Requesting self-assessment SII by students or teams | Identifying students to serve as consultants to other teams | Providing resources books, websites, handouts, etc. |
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| Clarifying a question rephrase it | Sending spies to eavesdrop on other teams | | | | |
team roles, setting rules, and confronting poor performance. She judges from his positive interest in the assessment results that the teacher is more than ready to accept an intervention. In their debriefing meeting she chooses to use an SII assessment of the teacher’s performance and when giving her insights includes a “just-in-time” lecture about the importance of gaining student buy-in to the process of learning to learn, rather than just memorizing concepts that will soon be outdated. As strengths, she emphasizes how courageous the teacher is for striving to improve his teaching and for struggling with these new methods even though he doesn’t see much success yet. As areas for improvement, she points out the need to grow the skills of defining team roles, setting rules, and confronting poor performance.

At first, the peer coach is unsure what to suggest that would help the teacher grow the three skills. She considers inviting the teacher to observe her class, identifying points in the class at which the teacher might intervene in different ways, or taking over his class for a day and letting the teacher observe how she handles the poor student performance. She rejects all these approaches as either being too passive or as undermining the teacher’s authority. She decides instead to suggest a role playing session. She set up a model class and encourages the teacher to assign roles, set rules, and intervene to challenge poor performance. She arranges with the students that they will play their resist-the-program roles. After the teacher finishes the exercise, the peer coach asks the students to describe their responses to his interventions. After a few rounds, the teacher feels more confident in his ability to challenge his class. In parting, the peer coach refers him to the Faculty Guidebook, especially the modules 3.1.5 Getting Student Buy-In and 3.1.3 Methodology for Creating a Quality Learning Environment.

As a follow-up, the peer coach asks to observe the class a few days later. There is a significant improvement. The teacher has stopped trying to teach the content and focuses on buy-in activities and requiring high student performance. The students’ improved buy-in is a typical student response when responsibility for learning is transferred to them and they are held accountable for their performance.

### Levels of Constructive Intervention

After considering these case studies, let us examine the levels of intervention available to the facilitator of student activities (Table 2).

Note that this module has focused attention on Level 1 in the discussion of the intervention cycle because growing learning skills is the primary goal of education. Once students have mastered their learning skills, other interventions, as indicated by the tables above and below are appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Intervention</th>
<th>Context by Level Use when:</th>
<th>Facilitator Skills by Level Use if:</th>
<th>Learner Readiness by Level Use to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Challenge Growth</strong> Make conscious the demonstrated potential for integrated learning</td>
<td>Learners have strong learning skills and knowledge</td>
<td>Learners display initiative and creativity beyond requirements</td>
<td>Challenge whether current assumptions are optimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Deepen Knowledge</strong> Clarify the scope of the knowledge included in the objectives</td>
<td>Opportunities arise for improving knowledge goals</td>
<td>Observe potential to make new knowledge connections</td>
<td>Suggest new examples or models to enhance insights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Enhance Facilitation</strong> Direct focus to improving facilitation planning</td>
<td>The facilitation plan did not predict all steps in a process</td>
<td>Facilitation plan incomplete or not prepared</td>
<td>Provide guidance for off-track learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Integrate Curriculum</strong> Direct focus to improving the curriculum</td>
<td>A learning activity has missing elements or resources</td>
<td>Observe ways to improve instructions</td>
<td>Provide support for missing prerequisite skills/knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Establish Learning Skills</strong> Clarify what learning skills are relevant</td>
<td>Learning skills enhancement is planned or needed</td>
<td>Assess that learning skills are slowing performance</td>
<td>Recommend diverse skills for addressing learning problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are so many potential constructive interventions, but there is space in Table 3 to suggest only a few sound examples for each level and purpose of intervention suggested by Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Intervention</th>
<th>Designing an Integrated Curriculum</th>
<th>Creating a Quality Learning Environment</th>
<th>Providing Effective Assessment</th>
<th>Creating Documentation of Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Challenge Growth</strong></td>
<td>Provide rubrics or measures that identify growth levels beyond the course</td>
<td>Plan higher level exercises to challenge growth</td>
<td>Challenge whether current assumptions are optimal</td>
<td>Provide opportunities to self-assess and reflect on growth, level of internalization, and metacognitive insights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Deepen Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Design the scope of knowledge to balance depth and breadth</td>
<td>Highlight new knowledge connections discovered by students</td>
<td>Recommend alternative data, examples, models, or theories to challenge knowledge integration</td>
<td>Set real-world standards for integrated performances that result in products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Enhance Facilitation</strong></td>
<td>Plan cooperative learning opportunities that “push” integration outcomes</td>
<td>Prepare a detailed facilitation plan to assure that objectives are achieved</td>
<td>Direct team or individual attention to missing elements of a relevant methodology</td>
<td>Plan course time and resources to assure that significant accomplishments are completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Integrate the Curriculum</strong></td>
<td>Incorporate key learning skills in course activities</td>
<td>Establish buy-in by providing a strong rationale for the course design/strategies</td>
<td>Refer to tutoring or other academic support resources for learning skills usually established in prerequisite courses</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for competencies, movement, experience, accomplishments, and integrated performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Establish Learning Skills</strong></td>
<td>Provide performance standards for learning skills</td>
<td>Provide opportunities to practice learning skills</td>
<td>Provide clear feedback on current level of performance of key learning skills for each activity</td>
<td>Require portfolios with interpretive journaling of learning skills performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Constructive Intervention Compendium

There are so many potential constructive interventions, but there is space in Table 3 to suggest only a few sound examples for each level and purpose of intervention suggested by Table 2.

### Concluding Thoughts

This module has emphasized the essential role of planning before engaging in successful constructive intervention. Illustrations were provided of how to work through the intervention cycle and a number of intervention strategies were modeled at both micro and macro levels. The challenge for educators is to find a mentor and to start with a number of peer coach engagements. Although inadequate performance at the start may be discouraging, it is important to persevere, using frequent self, peer, and student assessments to improve constructive intervention skills. Although success with constructive interventions is one of the most difficult facilitation skills to master, it is also the most important tool for helping students grow their learning skills.

### References


Reflection on Successful Constructive Interventions in this Workshop

Learning Skills

assessing performance, filtering, empathizing

Plan

1. Review the Faculty Guidebook module 3.2.8 Constructive Intervention Techniques
2. Using the form below, identify and describe instances in which you observed or experienced a constructive intervention.
3. Prepare to share your observations in a large group inventory of interventions observed.
4. Based upon the inventoried list from this event, brainstorm likely opportunities for such interventions within the course(s) you teach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructive Interventions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Growth</td>
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<tr>
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Activity End
3.2.5 Creating a Facilitation Plan

by Vicky Minderhout (Chemistry, Seattle University)

Facilitated activities are the public face of teaching. When preparing to facilitate learning, instructors can use a facilitation plan to maximize the effectiveness of face time with students or workshop attendees. Effective facilitation plans include time after each activity for the facilitator to assess his or her facilitation performance. To help instructors create facilitation plans, this module provides a universal template that can be applied in any discipline.

Need for a Plan

Careful planning lies at the heart of successful performance (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2004). The planning process recommended in this module will help instructors attend to facilitation principles (3.2.1 Overview of Facilitation), work through the facilitation methodology (3.2.3 Facilitation Methodology), and anticipate learner needs (3.2.6 Identifying Learner Needs). Since the needs of learners frequently arise from the way they take in and process information, most facilitators will find it beneficial to reflect on these issues and develop a written plan to address them. The preparation of a written plan before facilitating an activity serves as a prompt during facilitation, forms a permanent record of what was attempted by the teacher during the activity, and is a convenient tool for assessing facilitation performance.

Components of a Plan

A complete plan consists of three components. The first component encompasses planning prior to the facilitation (page one of the Facilitation Plan template). The second component involves recording data during the facilitation (page two of the template). And the third component assesses the quality of facilitation against learning outcomes, thus linking the facilitation plan to classroom execution and to outcomes. All three components are clearly identified in the template at the end of this module.

Part 1: Prior to the Activity

1. In preparing to facilitate a classroom activity, begin by establishing outcomes for the activity that emphasize the skills you intend to stress. The first example given in the Facilitation Methodology (3.2.3) module, introducing members of a new community to each other, illustrates this process. The desired outcomes for the activity are having each community member recognize the special qualities of every other member; making the first team activity a confidence-building one; promoting the experience of learning as fun; and emphasizing the fact that all students are accountable for their own learning. Note that to accomplish these outcomes, learners will need to use skills in empathizing and building self-esteem from the affective domain, skills in attending and rephrasing from the social domain, and skills in making connections and using divergent thinking from the cognitive domain. Evidence that the outcomes are being accomplished includes respectful language as the teams interview each other, full participation of all team members in the activity, and smiles along with signs that no one is goofing around.

2. Once outcomes are established, select an activity type to facilitate the outcomes (2.4.14 Designing Process-Oriented Guided-Inquiry Activities). Note that the outcomes or activity type selected may require different group sizes and roles.

3. Define any roles needed to support the outcomes and activity type (3.4.2 Designing Teams and Assigning Roles). In the example above, the facilitator decided to use a pair-share interview activity, so roles were not needed.

4. Prepare students for the planned learning activity through some type of pre-assessment. Students can prepare for many activities by completing an assignment prior to class. Pre-assessment in this case might be a quiz to help each student determine how well he or she understood the material in that assignment. Another way to prepare students is to plan a discussion at the beginning of class to make sure everyone understands concepts or issues that will be important to the planned learning activity. If the class will need to use the skill of rephrasing, for example, facilitators might want to budget ten minutes to elicit definitions of rephrasing and ask participants what evidence would prove that they were successfully rephrasing. This also elevates student awareness of a skill that can improve performance.

5. In the activity set-up, give the students an overview of the activity, making sure to focus on the purpose, expectations, roles, and amount of time allocated, including closure time. Also identify the learning skills students should focus on during the activity. In the example of getting the class more comfortable with each other, the facilitator tells students that the purpose of the activity is to introduce them to each other and make them comfortable in their groups. The facilitator notes that all class members are accountable for their interview information, that the format of the activity will be pair-share for twenty minutes, and that each student should focus on attending and rephrasing. The
facilitator also emphasizes the centrality of rephrasing to the success of this activity, thus preparing students for their pre-assessment activity in rephrasing. If the pre-assessment indicates a need for improvement, students must be prepared to engage in activities that will elevate their skills in rephrasing.

6. Anticipate what to expect when observing the group work. List the skills on which learners should focus (listed in the outcomes) and anticipate situations during the activity when you might observe them performing the skill. This will result in better real-time observations, improve interventions on process, and help participants create meaning and improve skills (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). In the example of getting to know one another, attending and rephrasing were given as skills in the outcomes, so the facilitator would expect to see some interchange between the two in the pair share, rather than just nodding of heads.

7. Plan for closure of the activity by addressing a variety of questions: What will be shared between the teams? Will the facilitator participate in sharing? Will the data be recorded on an overhead, on a computer, or on sheets collected from the groups? Will groups report on and/or turn in reflector and recorder reports? In the example we have been exploring, each student might be asked to introduce his or her interviewee and share something unique about the interviewee with the class. For activities that involve more cognitive outcomes, sharing discoveries about the material can concretize understanding.

Part II: During Activity

8. Follow through with the set-up and timing plan made prior to class. In the example, the plan calls for the activity set-up, followed by some whole class brainstorming on the definition of rephrasing and on qualities of effective rephrasing. This work is reported and recorded, and the teams are instructed to begin the pair-share activity. In any facilitation plan, the facilitator needs to note the effectiveness of the assessment, of participant preparation, and of the activity setup. He or she also notes how much time was spent.

9. During the activity, monitor the teams for real-time data on the interactions in the groups. Collect data by focusing on the identified skills but remain open to other observations. Include evidence of outcomes being met, questions asked by team captains, and your responses. Record any interventions you make and the result (3.2.7 Constructive Intervention and 3.2.8 Constructive Intervention Techniques).

10. During the closure period, document the team’s oral reports. The better your notes are during the classroom session, the more real-time data you will have to improve your performance as a facilitator.

Part III: After the Activity

11. During an activity, considerable data is often generated in the form of recorder reports, reflector reports, and closure notes. Analyzing this data reveals the difference between what was planned for the activity and what actually occurred. If the activity went well, it is useful to identify the key factors that came together to make it a success. If the activity did not help students meet the desired outcomes, review the components of the activity. Were the outcomes too broad? Was the activity type appropriate? If the students were not prepared, what could be done about this in the future? Did closure result in significant learning growth? Make sure to store lessons learned along with your activity sheets.

Assessing Facilitator Performance

12. A facilitation plan is also useful for improving the facilitator’s performance. If the activity outcomes are not met, the facilitator must decide if something is wrong with the activity and, if so, how to fix it. It is more important, however, to decide what to do in the next class session to improve the facilitation. For best results, the method used to assess the facilitator should generate strengths, areas for improvement, and insights about the facilitator’s performance (4.1.9 SII Method for Assessment Reporting).

Concluding Thoughts

The template given here serves as a both a prompt and an organizer for facilitation planning. It will take strong discipline to complete the template for each class, especially the “during” and “after” activity portions. Faculty who use all components of the facilitation plan are often motivated by the opportunity to use a portfolio of their plans as research for publication and/or to enhance their tenure applications.

References


Facilitation Plan—Prior to Class

1. Outcomes (List 2-3 outcomes and underlying skills from different domains and describe anticipated evidence that each has occurred.)

   •
   •
   •

2. Activity Type ______________________________________________________________
   (See Activity Types and select the one which best aids outcome achievement.)

3. Roles (See 3.4.2 Designing Teams and Assigning Roles)

   ________________________________  ________________________________
   ________________________________  ________________________________

4. Preparation Assessment Plan
   time allotted_______________

5. Activity Set-up Plan
   time allotted_______________

6. Group Work
   time allotted_______________

   Identify issues that may affect performance, link them to learning skills, and describe your anticipated response.

   Situation   Skill   Intervention

   Cognitive:

   Social:

   Affective:

7. Closure
   time allotted_______________
Facilitation Plan—During/after class

8. **Pre-Assessment and Activity Set-up Notes**  
   time spent________________

9. **Group Work Notes**  
   time spent________________
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Result</th>
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10. **Closure Notes**  
   time spent________________

11. **Reconciliation**

   *What evidence demonstrates that outcomes were met? Use data from group work to document.*

12. **Sll of Class Period**
### Student Success Workshop Take-Aways

Effective teaching/learning tools and techniques YOU have observed during the course of this workshop. (Strive to create a list of at least 15 items.)

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