

Faculty Fellows Project Report – Samuel Flaxman

As we near the end of the AY 17-18, we're eager to hear how your ASSETT Faculty Fellows projects are going. The following is a guide to use to describe your project, process, outcomes, and reflections. Ideally, we'd like to make these reports public to give you credit for all the hard work you've done. If you have data or other evidence to support your project, please include that with your report. Examples of data and other evidence include surveys, pictures, websites, student work examples, charts, etc.

Please submit this report by May 18, 2018, so that we can meet our fiscal year deadline. We will then request the transfer of the last half of your professional development award.

If you have any questions or need any assistance with your report, contact Andy or Amanda. We're happy to help.

Please address the following in your report:

- Title and brief description of your project
Title: "Developing training for undergraduate teaching assistants in EBIO 1210"
Brief description: I sought to develop and implement weekly trainings for the undergraduate TAs that serve EBIO 1210.
- Describe the challenge you addressed in your department with this project.
Each fall semester, EBIO 1210 has around 30-40 undergraduate teaching assistants that serve in its lectures and TA-help room office hours. Prior to fall 2018, undergraduate TAs received a one-time, in-person training session (during the first week of class), and then only weekly emails to check in. Our challenge was to do a better job training these wonderful students to serve in their roles as discussion catalysts (e.g., during active learning exercises) and educators.
- Describe desired result.
The goals were to give the TAs resources and training to help them (1) ask better questions of students, (2) start useful discussions with students, (3) avoid giving students "the answer" while still being helpful, and (4) adopt inclusive pedagogy practices.
- Describe the project. What did you do?
I organized weekly meetings of the undergraduate TAs, and I sourced and created pedagogical materials and activities for these meetings.
- Describe the outcome. What worked, what didn't work, lessons learned.
We had very productive and affirming discussions. We started every meeting with celebrations and challenges. The TAs brought great insights about which pieces of material were hardest for the students. The hardest part ("what didn't work") was that

there was no regular meeting time that all TAs could meet. We usually only had about 4-12 TAs in attendance (i.e., not even half). There was one week in which not a single TA showed up. The lesson learned is that we have to get a time(s) on the books that is required.

- Reflect on your experience in the Faculty Fellows program and working on your project. I very much enjoyed engaging in conversation and creativity with colleagues from around campus around issues of teaching. It was great to hear how many goals we all share, regardless of discipline. For example, we all wish our students were more engaged and practiced critical thinking more. We also all wish that there was more credit given during merit review, promotion, reappointment, and tenure processes for engagement in creative teaching transformation.
- If appropriate, please include other artifacts and visuals (data, weblinks, pictures, write-ups)
The trainings I developed are available in a Google Drive folder that I am happy to share with anyone that is interested. Some of the materials have answers to clicker, homework, and test questions, so I do not want to provide a direct link, but I am happy to share with individuals that request it. Several people at ASSETT/OIT already have access.