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TRESTLE SCHOLARS FACILITATOR REFLECTION SHEET

This reflection sheet is intended to capture your experience, feedback and advice as a facilitator of a Scholars group through the Transforming Education, Stimulating Teaching and Learning Excellence (TRESTLE) project. This report will be posted publicly as part of the group output, but you will have an option to make private comments. Please use complete sentences.

Semester and title of your TRESTLE Scholars group: Fall '16 Designing and facilitating group worthy activities

Your name: Jenny Knight

Please describe how the group went and its activities *(~ ½ page narrative. Please include: (1) the weekly list of topics, (2) how the meetings were structured, (3) any comments on the group process and how the group format was arrived at, and (4) list any products or outcomes from the group.*

(1,2,3)

At the beginning, I wanted to make it clear that the participants of this FLC were the drivers of their experience, not me. I wanted to be seen as their guide/facilitator/sounding board. I felt this was important for a few reasons:

1. This group of faculty were not novices, so I wanted to appreciate their experience and knowledge while empowering them to do more,
2. 2. As with students, I thought the group would have more engagement and ownership over their experience and outcomes if they were the drivers, and
3. 3. I wanted to share my experiences without being didactic. I wanted to let them lead, so that I could affirm their ideas and make additional suggestions or direct them to new resources without seeming as if I were lecturing them.

Accordingly, in the first session, I did not come in with a pre-planned syllabus of topics for the semester. I came with some ideas about what they might like to investigate regarding group work, and I let them tell me what they wanted to discuss. By the end of the meeting, we had a list of pretty much what I would have suggested we cover anyway, but they had built it. Importantly, they had decided that they really wanted to spend part of each meeting sharing in progress group activities they had designed for their courses rather than waiting until the end to develop and present such activities. Thus, the format of each of our meetings was as follows:

1. At least 5 days before each meeting, I put resources into the google drive folder (summaries of papers, the papers themselves, videos, other resources on the scheduled topic), and emailed the group letting them know what I had prepared for them and what they should do (usually, just peruse the materials).
2. At the meeting, we spent 45 minutes discussing those materials, using handouts and sometimes doing a short activity.
3. For the last half of each meeting, one person signed up to lead us through (and get feedback on) a group activity they had designed.

The format seemed to work very well—I tried to be careful to not let the first ½ of each session run too long, which meant sometimes I didn't talk about something that was in their folder for the day, or that I cut short a

planned activity. Participants generally had many questions and ideas to exchange during this first half of each session, so it did require watching the clock. On one or two occasions, the activity planned for the second half didn't take quite 45 minutes, but we never ended more than 10 minutes early. The participants were highly engaged in carrying out each others' activities: we all commented several times how great it was both to be a "novice" and have novice perspectives when considering how well the activities worked or didn't work. I had the feeling that each person left with valuable edits: ideas for making wording or objectives more clear, ideas for how to implement, modifications to visual or tactile aids etc., and that each of the participants in the activities enjoyed the process of being a student.

Meeting Schedule:

8/23: Introductions, Personal and Group Goals, decisions about what we want to discuss, ice-breaker activities.	
9/6: How to establish, organize and manage groups in different settings	**Nikki:** Residence time and Talking climate
9/20: Different kinds of activities for group work; what works and why	**Alex:** CO2 and sea ice activity
10/4: Assessing effectiveness of group work	**Melissa:** Impact of phase changes on the temperature of the atmosphere
10/25: Implementation and Facilitation (clickers)	**Cheryl:** Cell cycle, Meiosis, Ploidy
11/1: Techniques for increasing buy-in and engagement	**Abbie**: Central limit theorem
11/15: Techniques for increasing buy-in and engagement	**Becca:** Metacognition activities
11/29: Group work in small vs. large classes (design and facilitation ideas)	**Julie**
12/6: Wrap up: reflect on individual goals, process of the FLC, what have you learned	

4. The group put together reflections on the last day, and they can be found in the google drive folder. Also in that folder are all the activities and the participants' reflections on the process of sharing and changing their activities.

How did you create a sense of community, especially in the first few weeks of meetings? *(This information will be useful for future facilitators)*

I use a similar approach for all of my "first day of class" activities in workshop settings. Everything I do is a demonstration of what they could do with their own students. Thus, we begin by making table tents with our names and descriptors, then everyone picks a constructive and destructive behavior from a list (and I discuss why this is important to do) and we discuss our behaviors. This is a great ice breaker. I also ask people to write down their personal goals for the semester, and then we share them. I type them up, and send them back around at the end of the semester to (hopefully) allow people to see that they have achieved or made

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progress toward their goals. I do a few other things I think help people feel connected to each other and me: I affirm their ideas when they volunteer problems or goals (such as, "Yes that's a common problem! Has that happened to anyone else?" or "I know what that feels like!"). I also try to ensure that the less talkative people get a chance to share their ideas by specifically calling on them. Each time I use a technique that might also work for the participants with their own students, I tell them what I did and why, so they might see it's relatively easy to employ some of these techniques.

What "lessons learned" came out of this semester's Scholars Group? What recommendations would you make to another facilitator?

The only thing I really wished for was a note-taker. I couldn't facilitate and take notes at the same time, and so had to rely on my memory to write up meeting notes later. Especially because we were working on activities for the second half of each meeting, and I wanted/needed to participate in order to give good feedback, I really wrote down almost nothing about the activities in my notes. The consolation was that the people presenting their activities were definitely taking notes on how they wanted to change things, so I am confident they got a lot out of it.

What impacts did you observe on TRESTLE Scholars? *How did conversations shift, what sorts of ideas seemed most transformative for participants, what comments were made about changes in the classroom?*

They seemed to gain some confidence in trying new approaches, and a deeper awareness of the literature to support practices. They also seemed able to incorporate many of the topics we discussed in their activities. Everyone indicated they'd be trying their activities, or modifying and retrying them, or incorporating many of the practices we had discussed in their courses. They became very interested in assessment towards the end, discussing how they weren't sure how to assess the efficacy of their in-class work, and needed help with assessment in general. I suggested they put together an assessment group, or recommend this topic as a future TRESTLE topic.

What recommendations do you have for TRESTLE?   (Consider ways that TRESTLE could have better supported you and/or participants).

I felt well-supported.