



ACE IT!

Quality Enhancement Plan: The ACES Project
The Newsletter for Lamar’s Quality Enhancement Plan:
Active & Collaborative Engagement for Students

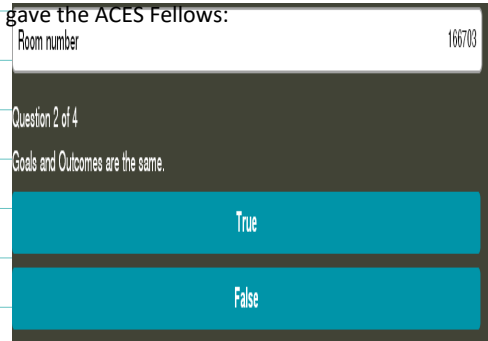
September 2013
Volume 2, Issue 1

Creating a Student-Centered Classroom

With the start of the new semester, we greet not only a new academic year, but also a new beginning for the university. In the spirit of new beginnings, the QEP/ACES staff encourages you to embrace a new beginning for your teaching by creating a student-centered classroom.

Socrative

This software is the *free* and feature-filled answer to Iclickers. You can create quizzes, exit tickets, and, for a little group competition, space races. Here’s a screenshot from a quiz I gave the ACES Fellows:



As Lamar University faculty, you are fortunate to have colleagues who are or have been ACES Fellows from which to learn active and collaborative techniques, the Center for Teaching and Learning Enhancement (CTLE), and a new president who holds up faculty as the university’s greatest resource (Convocation 2013) and supports teaching innovation and the student-centered classroom.

When asked about his thoughts on teaching innovation, Dr. Evans first defined the classroom as an environment that should privilege student engagement with content over dissemination of content. He then fondly recalled his own teaching experiences and successful endeavors in creating a student-centered classroom. To achieve this and, in turn, provide his students with experiential learning, Dr. Evans created opportunities for his students to “crawl into the problems” of a company or client for the purpose of creating and presenting solutions. It is this kind of “application-based environment” that allows teachers, Dr. Evans stresses, to “learn from the way students perceive the content.”

(What do you think? See pg. 4 for the answer.)

Grading the quizzes? Socrative takes care of that and prepares the results for you as an Excel spreadsheet.

To log in, students need only the room number you’re assigned when you create your free account. Accessing Socrative can be done via the website or the free app with any internet-ready device (like those smartphones in our students’ laps during class).

This shift from traditional lecture-based teaching takes one’s classroom from an instructor-centered environment to a student-centered environment, in which both the student and the teacher benefit. Indeed, as John Cotton Dana said, “Who dares to teach must never cease to learn.”

Two ACES participants share their experiences with Socrative:

“I began using it in fall 2011 and let my students know that they were the guinea pigs for this project. They were quite happy to test it with me especially since it meant they could save around \$30 by not having to buy the i>clicker. At the end of the semester, I took a poll and by overwhelming majority, the students let me know they enjoyed using Socrative and that I should continue to use it for my classes. Socrative was fun, VERY easy to use, and gave my students a fun way to interact while answering questions for quizzes, “exit tickets,” or “space races” -- I certainly enjoy the new features they’ve since added such as the ability to add pictures to quiz questions and the “Socrative Garden” available to teachers for ideas and motivation in using Socrative.” **Michelle “MO” Ozmun** (Cohort 3— Dance)

What follows will help you easily foster a new beginning for your teaching (and learning):

Welcome, ACES Cohort 5!

José Andino, Chemistry: Chemistry is a fascinating topic and its instruction should be just as exciting, but it is often confusing or misunderstood. I am passionate about teaching and find ACES as a great opportunity to become a more effective teacher. I have high expectations about bringing in a fresher set of ideas to motivate my students and help them succeed in their learning process and lives.

Kat Blackwell-Starnes, English: I joined ACES to improve my writing instruction in core composition courses. Writing requires so much hands-on work that students can quickly be turned off to writing assignments. My hope is that I can expand my hands-on workshops to include many more that deeply engage my students and help them see writing as an exciting process of discovery rather than a chore.

Bianca Easterly, Political Science: I'd like to learn new ways to integrate interesting and useful writing assignments in my American Government courses. Specifically, I'd like my students to use regular writing assignments to connect concepts introduced in class with the political world around them, but I don't necessarily want to spend an enormous amount of time providing feedback. I hope this experience will help me avoid some of the perils new educators often face by developing effective pedagogical skills early in my career.

TJ Geiger, English: I joined ACES because it provides an opportunity to work with colleagues from across the disciplines on a project dedicated to improving teaching and learning.

Theresa Hefner-Babb, Library: I applied for the ACES fellowship because I wanted to discover active ways to teach the LIBR 1101 course in an online setting. I hope to gain fresh perspective from my colleagues in the cohort.

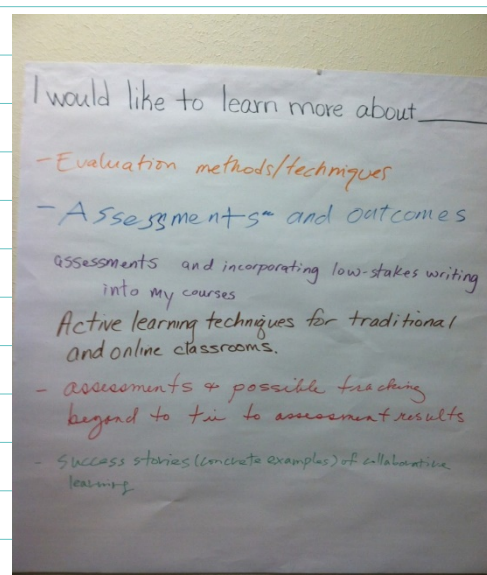
Mark Mengerink, History: I applied for an ACES fellowship for the opportunity to breathe new life into my teaching and benefit my students. In the first couple of ACES meetings, I have come to realize that challenging the students by creating more engaging and collaborative assignments will involve considerable time investment but the enormous educational benefits will make the hard work worthwhile.

Terry Price, Physics: I joined ACES originally because I was asked to apply for the program. After years of action research and reflection, I had changed/refined my understanding of how learning took place. BUT I transitioned from teaching 25-45 students to teaching about 100 per class. I am very happy that I have joined the ACES ranks as I undertake the task of making sure my students in large classes get a quality class.

Yasuko Sato, History: I became part of the program because active learning seeks authentic growth (rather than rote memorization for tests and grades). I hope to learn how to thrill students and help them develop a genuine interest in serious matters in the world, especially through communicative interactions. I'd like to see students blossom like flowers, because my role as an ACES Fellow is like that of a gardener!

Megan Young, Art: I joined ACES because I strongly believe in the power and importance of active and collaborative learning. I think that the ACES program can better prepare us as faculty to engage our students more thoroughly and effectively in critical thinking, making them more well rounded and productive members of society both during their time at Lamar and when they enter the job market.

Here's what the Fellows want to learn about:



Continue to page 3 to see the Fellows engaged in this adapted version of the [First-Day Graffiti](#) activity.

Creating a Student-Centered Classroom

(continued from pg. 1)

“I have used Socrative only occasionally in my math classes, but it always gets my students motivated and highly involved in the lesson. I have used it with multiple choice worksheets and the caution to be sure that each group member agrees with the answer before anything is submitted. Using this tool gives the students immediate feedback and generates questions when an answer is marked incorrect! Also, I’ve recently discovered that I can take photos of problems to post on Socrative and, using the photos, the need for an extra worksheet is eliminated, and the students can enter their answers directly into Socrative without the necessity of having multiple choice questions.” **Lynn Carter** (Cohort 4—College-Readiness Math)

Punctuated Lectures

Providing brief “intermissions” during a lecture can help students refocus and can help you determine what they’re getting (or not) from your lecture. It’s also an easy way to introduce active learning into your classes.

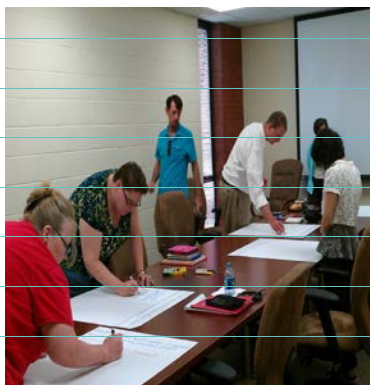
Simply stop every 15 or 20 minutes to ask students what their understanding about the topic or concept is at that point or how the new information is related to previous learning. Asking them when they may have become lost or distracted and why will provide you with the feedback you need to make sure your lectures are clear, well-organized, and well-paced.

Think-Pair-Share

Developed by Frank Lyman (1981), this activity boosts student participation because it requires all students not only to answer questions but also to respond to their classmates’ responses and to share their own. Here’s how you can implement it: pose a question that demands analysis, evaluation, or synthesis and ask students to generate an answer. Give them sufficient time to form an answer and write it down. Once this time is up, ask students to pair up and discuss their responses. Finally, ask your students to share their responses either in larger groups made up of two or three pairs or with the entire class. If you want your students to share in groups, ask them to construct a group answer to the question and share with the class and/or submit it to you so that you can check their understanding and accuracy.

Implementing changes gradually will allow you to determine the impact on student learning and will ensure that your shift to a student-centered classroom is more manageable. For more techniques, see Barbara Millis’ [article](#), specifically pgs. 3-4.

The New ACES Fellows at Work!



The Center for Teaching and Learning Enhancement Volume 2, Issue 1 **ACE IT!**

The Center for Teaching and Learning Enhancement (CTLE) has partnered with [Wiley Learning Institute](#)

to bring you the best in live and on-demand professional development events.

Tentative schedule of Wiley events for Fall 2013

(CTRL-Click on the titles to learn more about each webinar)

10/08: [How to Inspire Wonder, Curiosity and Creativity Through Project-Based Learning](#)

10/11: [Teaching Naked: Technology and E-Communication for Student Engagement](#)

10/16: [Strategies for Using Online Learning to Improve Educational Quality](#)

11/12: [Teaching Naked: Technology and E-Communication for Student Engagement](#)

We'll also continue to offer multiple Lunch & Learns, speaker events, and the return of Technologized Classroom spaces, Online Course Development.

Keep an eye on your inbox for announcements about these and other CTLE events!
the Faculty Learning Communities, including FLCs on Leadership training, Diversity,

QEP/ACES	CTLE
<p>Melissa Hudler, Director Library, 615 (409) 880-8525, (409) 880-2188 (fax) melissa.hudler@lamar.edu PO Box 10302</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Office Hours: M, Th, F, 9-11 and 2-4 Wed. 9-10, 2-3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr. Amy Smith, Associate Director Maes 37 (409) 880-8563 amy.smith@lamar.edu Tues. 9-12</p>	<p>Dr. Steven Zani, Director Library, 618 (409) 880-7553, (409) 880-2188 (fax) steve.zani@lamar.edu PO Box 10302</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9-12</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr. Rezvan Khoshlessan, Assistant (409)880-2393 rkhoshless@lamar.edu</p>
<p>Melonee Fife, Executive Assistant <small>Library, 617</small> Office of Planning and Assessment Library, 612 (409) 880-8426 melonee.fife@lamar.edu</p>	

Answer to quiz question on page 1: **False**

Outcomes are more specific than goals, in that they are *measurable*. As such, outcomes should be conveyed using active verbs, such as *illustrate, demonstrate, analyze, apply, and evaluate*.

