



2024 Global SaP Roundtable Case Study

Student—Faculty Course Design Groups

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At Elon University in North Carolina, faculty, students, and educational development staff partner in course design teams (CDT) to co---create a course syllabus. Typically, a CDT is comprised of 1-2 faculty, 2-6 undergraduate students, and 1 educational developer. Faculty members initiate the redesign process.

Once assembled, the CDT uses a backward---design approach (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), first developing course goals and then building pedagogical strategies and learning assessments on the foundation of those goals. Often the teams take as a starting point a significant teaching problem that the instructors identify and choose to treat as an object of scholarly inquiry (Bass, 1999). Teams usually meet weekly for two or three months, providing ample opportunities to both accomplish the CDT's practical purpose of redesigning the course and, perhaps more important, to develop a true partnership that not only welcomes student voices but balances faculty and student contributions to the design process.

A common challenge for the course design teams is rethinking and redistributing power. In interviews after the completion of a CDT's work, both faculty and students typically bring up the struggle of adjusting to new power dynamics. The educational developer on the CDT helps all team members navigate these potentially stormy waters by facilitating the initial group meetings and intentionally modeling behaviors that challenge assumptions about power and roles (like playing devil's advocate to any idea that easily finds consensus around the table).

While not all of the redesigned courses are transformed, nor are they all immediately successful, faculty consistently report that the new courses are substantially better than the prior versions. Probably the most significant outcomes, however, are the enhanced engagement and meta-cognition that both students and faculty develop in the process. (For other discussions of this program, see Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014; Delpish et al., 2010; Mihans et al., 2008.)

References

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