Designing Activities that Enhance Student Learning

Please use this form to describe a teaching activity that you have modified or developed (or will modify or develop) in response to the working group sessions.

Name: Amin Azzam

Role (*circle one*): (Faculty Member) Graduate Student/GSI Other _____

Home Department(s): School of Public Health; UCB-UCSF Joint Medical Program

Course(s) in which you would use this teaching activity: Educational Leadership

Activity Title: Course Revision for Increased Student Engagement

Description:
Please give a short synopsis of the activity and its learning goals, maximum 100 words.

In order to maintain student interest and engagement with a flexibly-scheduled online course on Educational Leadership, I will create short-term deadlines for learners to complete assignments along the way. I am also planning to hold some in-person sessions at which learners would discuss assignments they have already completed, establishing community within the course and reinforcing the incremental deadlines.

If this is an activity you have used in the past but now will modify in response to the Working Group sessions, please describe the activity as you previously conducted it:

For the past two years, the "Educational Leadership" course, part of the Health Professions Education pathway for medical students, residents and fellows at UCSF, has been taught entirely online. The course consists of seven activity modules; for the first assignment, students write their own educational leadership plans, reflecting on their individual goals, and for the last assignment, they repeat this activity looking back on their progress during the course and on into the future. Other modules ask students to reflect on selected readings on educational leadership in the health professions, to conduct and write about an interview with an educational leader, and to observe and describe an educational leader in action (e.g. running a committee). The course was originally designed with maximum flexibility in mind, so that residents and fellows, whose schedules are complicated and overloaded with patient care demands, could work at their own pace and with their own needs in mind. The course was housed online and all the assignments were to be turned in at the end of the academic year. However, students often failed to turn in

the assignments, and this high degree of flexibility often resulted in a disengagement from the course.

Describe the changes you made or will make to the activity and the reasoning behind these changes.

I plan to create short-term deadlines for students to complete assignments along the way, so that the procrastinators cannot leave it all until the end of the academic year. I also plan to hold two in-person meetings at which students come having already completed an assignment; these meetings would be structured to be learner-centered, with the instructor simply functioning as a facilitator of the discussion.

Which session(s) of the Working Group influenced the changes you made or will make to this activity? How so?

The March 8 session, at which Art Shimamura and John Kihlstrom spoke, influenced my decision to make these changes. Topics such as the social aspects of learning, the usefulness of self-testing to improve learning, and the effect of pacing and repetition on learning contributed to my thinking.

How will you assess the effectiveness of this activity in enhancing student learning?

I will be looking for students to turn in their assignments with greater regularity and for a higher proportion of them complete the course.