

Faculty Professional Development Center

Learning Community Activity Updates

Learning Community: Improving Technical Report Writing: Professional

Date of Meeting: 11/8/07

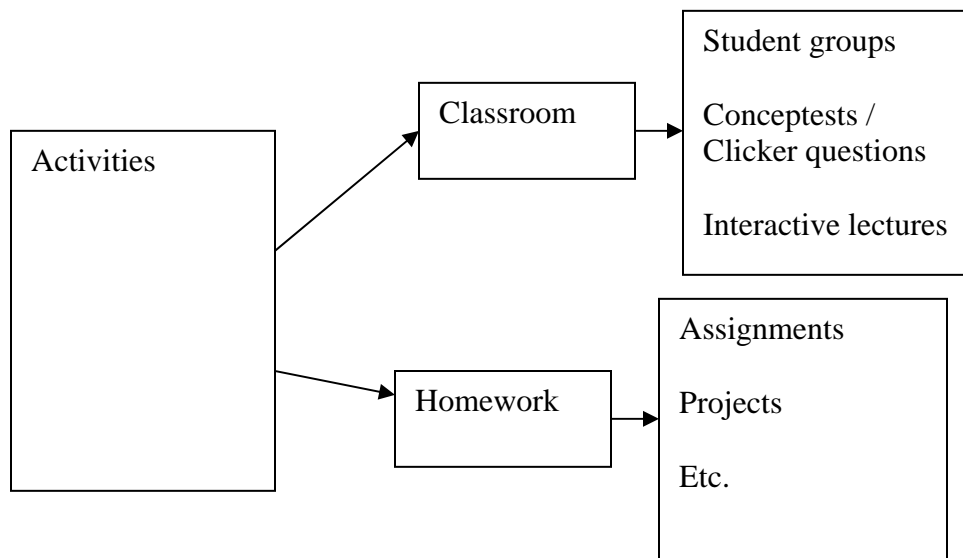
Meeting location: SHS 130, The University of Akron

LC members present: Sue Ramlo, John Nicholas, Lori Kraft, Mike Johanyak

Please describe the topics covered at the meeting or a summary of the event:

Sue began by discussing the Science Education Resource Center (SERC) website and, more specifically, our module at SERC - Authentic Writing for STEM. We reviewed the module development, how to edit the module pages (none of which are live yet), and the submission of activities.

A discussion followed about what “activities” entailed. The following is a graphic that represents the encompassing view of activities.



Mike said that many of his in-class activities and homework assignments are smaller segments of larger projects such that the small assignments build into the larger assignment sections.

We discussed the types of activities / pedagogies from the SERC site. Sue showed some examples. The structure of the SERC activities is pre-set by SERC so that all activities appear uniform. Each activity includes a “what it is”, “how to use it”, learning goals/objectives, and assessment.

A discussion of assessment followed, including the writing of measurable learning objectives. Sue will try to get some materials on writing learning objectives and distribute them to our LC members. Mike said that the TRW faculty have been busy developing learning objectives / outcomes for the TRW course. He said he believes that these outcomes will not be finalized until the end of the spring semester. He said that the TRW faculty envision maintaining same / similar learning outcomes for all sections of TRW but that faculty would “personalize” their courses by selecting their own student assignments / activities, potentially from the activities our LC develops.

Further discussion followed concerning student writing ability and the need for students to demonstrate both writing skill and the ability to perform analyses (e.g. analyze data, findings, graphics, etc). Sue said that she would rather have a student with imperfect writing who could write analytically than the other way around (e.g. someone who could write beautiful prose but the whose writing demonstrated a unilateral/ simplistic critical thinking level).

At our next meeting, we will work:

- Contribute more text / revise text for the SERC Authentic Writing for STEM module.
- TRW faculty will discuss the current state of the development of objectives / goals for the TRW course.
- The group will assess current TRW activities and TRW student objectives / outcomes; we will discuss these as part of our meeting.
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