



Faculty Formative Feedback Project

Executive Summary

The purpose of the university Faculty Formative Feedback Project (FFFP) is to provide instructors feedback on pedagogy allowing them to optimize the instructional experience for the diverse student population of the campus. Faculty participation is voluntary and not tied to university or program evaluative measures, allowing instructors to gather information from a variety of sources through a system that is solely focused on support and opportunity for personal growth. Instructors participating in this project are receiving practical formative feedback that they can immediately apply in the classroom. They should see an increase in student engagement, leading to a more positive interactive experience with students and course outcomes. In addition, this endeavor seeks to increase the retention of women and faculty of color by providing a non-evaluative support and development path. The project is open to lecturers and tenure-track faculty.

The Faculty Formative Feedback Project aligns with Beach 2030 University values and strategic priorities and action plans in several ways. Development of the process and tools for formative feedback have focused on alternative methods for measuring both instructor and student engagement behaviors to offer formative, actionable feedback and the opportunity for instructors to implement any desired changes before the close of the semester.

Started in Spring 2020, the project has evolved through piloting phases to develop a system for non-evaluative formative feedback which includes a *Consultancy Protocol*, *Student Engagement Survey*, *Instructional Self-Reflection Survey*, and *Instructor Observation Tool*. The project offers interested faculty the opportunity to self-select from two levels of participation, called Level 1 or Level 2. Each level of participation provides 1:1 consultation with a trained FFFP partner. In our two semesters of operation, 67 faculty members from across colleges and ranks have participated.



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Table 1: FFFP Alignment with Beach 2030

Values and Strategic Priorities	FFFP Component
<i>Engage all students - prepare students to think critically through responsive, flexible, disciplinary, and interdisciplinary curricula.</i>	Faculty participants directly survey student engagement in their course of choice, engage students in directed conversation about participation/engagement, and consider changes in response to the information they gain.
<i>Expand access - Adapt all teaching and learning resources to address the unique needs and strengths of our students so as to ensure their personal and professional success.</i>	Faculty participants consider the needs of students in their course and can choose to have a project partner observe synchronous instruction with the goal to make pedagogical growth.
<i>Promote intellectual achievement</i>	Faculty participants engage in collaborative consultation with project partners to improve instruction and ultimately improve student learning and intellectual achievement.
Action Plan	FFFP Component
<i>Build an equitable and empowering culture</i>	Faculty participants and partners engage in meaningful conversation about addressing inequities in the university classroom, student and faculty social identities, and improving student learning in each course’s unique context. Project tools support this effort with explicit focus on an equitable classroom.

Background

Our work as a leadership team began Spring 2020 with aim to identify and design tools for pedagogical assessment. The team aimed to ensure the process and tools created were distinguishable from Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) and other means of formal evaluation. The use of student evaluations of teaching (SET) as the only measure of teaching effectiveness has been widely criticized, though there is a

large literature base to support their use (Benton & Cashin, 2011). The biggest concerns about SET are: (1) potential bias against women and persons of color and (2) a weak relationship with evidence-based teaching practices (Basow, Codos, & Martin, 2017; Chisadza, Nicholls, & Yitbarek, 2019; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007). However, predictive validity studies are the hallmark for establishing bias and these seem to be absent in the literature base. In light of criticisms, potential bias, and need for future work in this area, the addition of multiple data sources beyond SET are necessary to support teaching.

The leadership conceptualized a process that would consider both instructor and student engagement behaviors to offer formative, actionable feedback and the opportunity for instructors to implement any desired changes before the close of the semester. Capturing objective information on student engagement was central to this process given its link to positive learning and academic outcomes (Smith and Baik, 2019). This process, like all others, pivoted during pandemic closures in March 2020 and leadership reimagined what this might look like across both face-to-face and online courses. During the remainder of Spring and the entirety of Fall semesters 2020 the leadership designed a *Consultancy Protocol*, *Student Engagement Survey*, *Instructional Self-Reflection Survey*, and *Instructor Observation Tool*.

Consultancy Protocol

The *Consultancy Protocol* (Figure 1) was developed based on our research into effective university practices elsewhere and our own experiences working in clinical educational settings. The leadership designed the process to have two pathways, or levels, of participation. This was done to offer faculty participants a deep dive into their teaching or a quick check-in for feedback on student engagement. Both options include a goal setting activity at the end so that the data collected can be immediately used to make instructional decisions during the current semester.

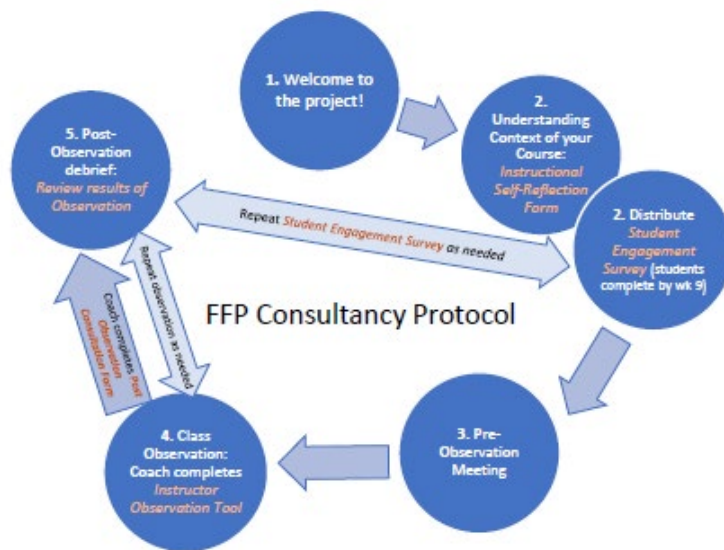


Figure 1. Graphical display of the FFFP Consultancy Protocol

Level 1: Quick Check-In

The quick check-in involves minimal time on the part of the faculty member but provides useful, actionable feedback mid-way through the semester. This option of participation is called Level 1. Level 1 consists of an initial meeting between an FFFP partner and faculty participant. This initial meeting builds rapport while giving the FFFP partner some background information about the class being supported. The participating faculty member then distributes an anonymous *Student Engagement Survey*. The FFFP partner and faculty member meet to discuss and debrief the data and talk about possible goals for change. The participating faculty member has the option to distribute the *Student Engagement Survey* a second time if they want to see the impact of their modifications.

Level 2: Deep Dive

Participants wishing a more in-depth experience opt for Level 2. This includes the initial rapport building meeting, the completion of an *Instructional Self-Reflection tool*, distribution of the *Student Engagement Survey*, a class observation, and a post-observation debrief. The *Instructional Self-Reflection tool* asks the participating faculty member to reflect on instructional strategies, course goals and objectives, organizational features of the class and more. This helps drive the pre-observation meeting which in turn helps focus the FFFP partner's observation of a class. The post-observation debrief looks at data from the classroom observation and the *Student Engagement Survey* to develop an action plan in tandem with the participant.

Project Tools

Student Engagement Survey

The *Student Engagement Survey* was based on previous work that considered engagement as multi-faceted and including cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Handelsman, Briggs, Sullivan, & Towers, 2005). This conceptualization of engagement goes beyond merely examining whether students are turning in accurate assignments or posting on discussion boards and aims to also include how students feel about a class or area of study. This emotional component is associated with connecting material to one's own experience and the ability to apply knowledge gained in other contexts. The Online Student Engagement Scale (OSE; Dixson, 2015) is a tool with Likert-style questions that considers students' self-report of their own: skills, participation, performance, and emotions about a specific class. We adapted the OSE and also created questions to address student perceptions of course design and teaching as well as two open-ended, narrative questions to address what is and is not helpful about the class. The *Student Engagement Survey* is anonymous and takes an average of 4 minutes for students to complete.



Instructional Self-Reflection Survey

To provide participant faculty members who opted for Level 2 an opportunity to take a deeper look at their current instructional practices and course materials, the *Instructional Self-Reflection Survey* was developed. The survey combines reflective questions or prompts that were pulled from two sources. First, the form utilizes the [CSULB Academic Senate's policy](#) on course syllabi and standard course outline requirements. Participating faculty members are given 19 prompts pulled from this policy and indicate whether the elements are present or not present in their syllabus. Secondly, the survey links to six (6) qualitative prompts drawn from the COPUS observation protocol (Smith et al, 2013) that are also the guiding instructional domains for the *Instructor Observation Tool* that was developed for this project. This *Instructional Self-Reflection Survey*, once completed, provides a rich starting point for collaborative consultation between participating faculty and FFFP partners.

Instructor Observation Tool

Developing a system for non-evaluative peer observations of teaching and feedback was a critical element of this project's initial goals. For faculty participants who opt for Level 2, a system has been created to provide one (1) mutually arranged observation, done virtually or in-person, of classroom teaching. The *Instructor Observation Tool* is focused around six (6) qualitative question prompts that were adapted from the COPUS observation protocol (Smith et al., 2013) and features of classroom culture that support equitable sensemaking and culturally responsive and sustaining practices (CAMINOS, 2020; OpenSciEd, 2019). See Figure 2 below for these prompts. Partners from the FFFP project use the prompts provided to gather observational notes based on seen interactions and perceived engagement of students. As shared, this process is non-evaluative and therefore the notes

that are taken are used to simply guide conversation with faculty as they reflect on the six category prompts. The observation experience is tied to the previously completed *Self-Reflection Tool* and *Student Engagement Survey* results, leading to a robust conversation around instructor actions and possible goals for improvement. Notes from observations are not made public, and again only shared via oral conversation with participating faculty members.

Observation Notes					
<p>1) Organization: Preview of the content being covered? Review of the preceding session, big picture of the course, or connections to real-world or other disciplines? Summaries of material being covered? Reflective Activities? Visuals/demos for clarity?</p>	<p>2) Content: Taught at a level appropriate for the students? Expectations appropriately high with supports? Good illustrative examples of major concepts? Effective ties of concepts to course themes? Critical, thought-provoking questions? Meaning making?</p>	<p>3) Rapport: Questions and discussion from students encouraged? Participation encouraged and all ideas seen as valuable and helpful? Student knowledge is acknowledged and valued? Fostered interpersonal dialogue? Sense of community? (use student names, links to their life and experiences, home life to content, etc.). Student questions used to drive instruction?</p>	<p>4) Equitable Classroom: Content reflect a diversity of voice? Encourage and facilitate dialogue and student-student interaction (help people find partners, structure activities to promote equal participation)? Opportunities to engage (head nodding, speaking, hand signals, body language, technology)? Class session accessible and welcoming to all (e.g. pictures show a variety of races, ethnicities, and genders; names used in problems are not ethnocentric)? Respectful and inclusive language?</p>	<p>5) Teaching Strategies: Variety of teaching techniques (small groups, paired learning, whole group discussion, silent writing and reflection, feedback discussion)? Techniques to freshen energy and attention? Wait time for questions? Multiple responses to the questions? Low-stakes assessment (such as iClicker questions, chat box, 1-minute papers, etc.</p>	<p>6) Student Engagement: Frequency and levels of student engagement? Adjustments attempted for low or medium levels of engagement?</p>
Notes and link to 6 categories:					

Figure 2 Instructor Observation Tool

Pilot Project Activities

During Spring 2020 the leadership of this project and some trusted colleagues from across campus piloted the *Student Engagement Survey* in their own classrooms. The pilot process resulted in a reduced number of questions, individualized surveys to all for visual presentation of information, and a conceptual shift in the purpose of this survey which resulted in changing the title from a one-time “Midpoint Periodic Student Engagement Survey” to a repeatable survey that looks at “Student Engagement Survey” over the arc of the semester. This pilot experience gave leadership a chance to practice debriefing survey data and to develop prompts for guiding faculty participants through this process.

During Fall 2020, FFFP leadership solicited applications for Faculty Partners from across the university and planned seminars to introduce them to the process, tools and to practice implementation. The goal was to train and support a cadre of FFFP partners who would work directly with faculty participants. A call for applications to be a Faculty Partner was distributed university wide with a team of five partners selected from a pool of 27 for Spring 2021. Weekly seminars were led by leadership during Spring 2021 with the first cohort of faculty partners to prepare them to work with Level 1 and Level 2 participants who signed up for the project. The weekly seminars included readings, guided practice in providing feedback, observations of recorded teaching episodes to help identify areas of strength and weakness, and an overview of how to implement the Consultancy Process described above. A call for faculty participation was distributed during the first weeks of the Spring semester and 27 faculty applied to join the project.

We collected data from the Partners and participants at the end of spring 2021 to inform our work moving forward. There was an overwhelmingly positive response from participants. They found the

process of working with their Partner to be helpful and informative. They found value in talking with someone about pedagogy specific to their own class. They were able to identify things to change and make those changes during the semester. For some, the time spent talking to someone about teaching was cathartic and helped break down isolation that resulted from the year spent teaching entirely online.

During Summer 2021, project leadership revised tools and materials based on feedback received from pilot trainings and the first semester of implementation. This included revising the data collection and record keeping tools which FFFP partners use with their faculty participants. Modifications were desired for the distribution and coordination of resources which resulted in the use of a [padlet](#) site to coordinate project resources. This has worked nicely as a one stop repository of project materials and resources, accessible to the FFFP partners.

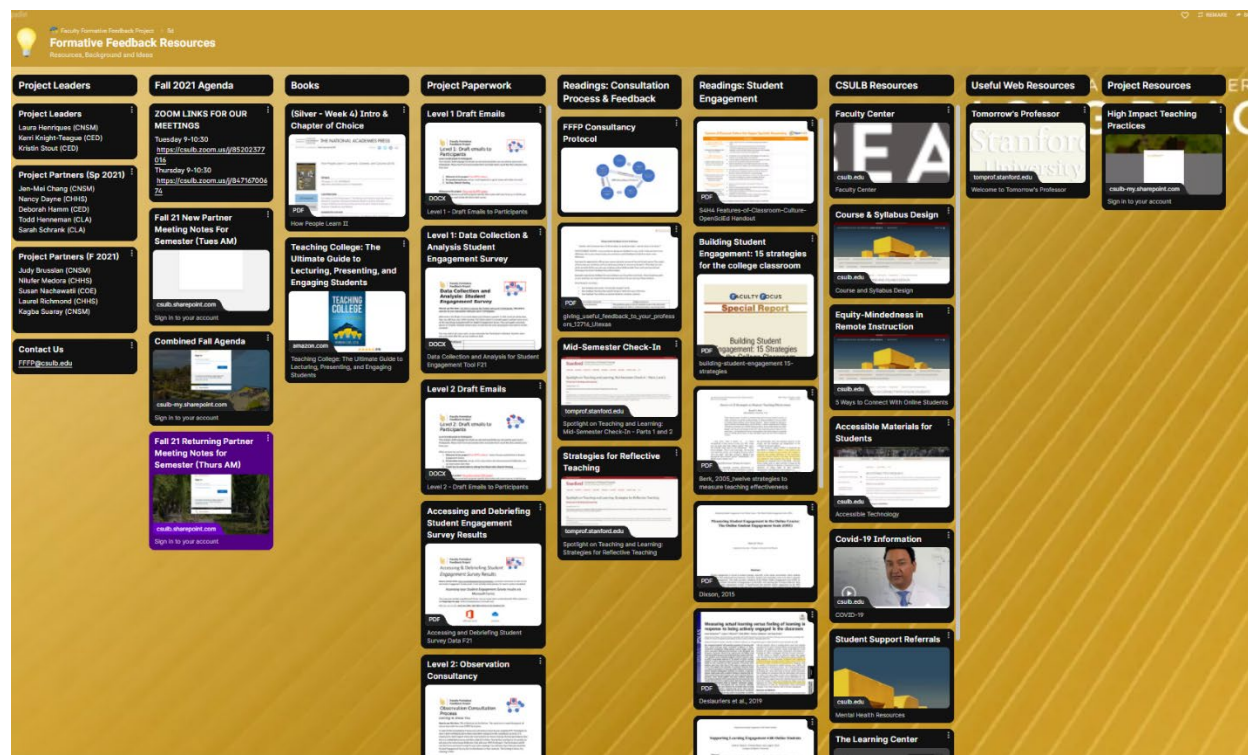


Figure 1. Screenshot of the Faculty Formative Feedback Resources padlet

In planning for the next cohort of FFFP partners who would be recruited, leadership developed a new series of activities that would further the training and support for returning FFFP partners and provided recruitment and preparation for a new cohort of FFFP partners for Fall 2021. Another call for partners went out for participate in 2021-2022. The plan is to have an ever-growing cadre of faculty partners who can do this work. Four partners, from a pool of 54, were selected to join the project. During Fall 2021 the two cohorts of partners met together several times, but most of the weekly seminars are cohort specific. This allows the new cohort to learn the process and helps the experienced cohort to dig deeper into the work. The two cohorts will meet together during Spring 2022.

Table 2 shows information about the FFFP partner applications and eventual selection. Table 3 provides information about the faculty participants across the two semesters. We did not collect demographic

data from participants when they apply to participate. During fall 2021 an anonymous survey was sent to both groups of participants to collect some of that data on those engaged in the project.

Table 2. FFFP Partner Information

	Spring 2021 Partners	Fall 2021-Spring 2022 Partners
Partner Applications	N=27 CBA: 0 CED: 2 COE: 4 CHHS: 10 CLA: 8 CNSM: 3 COTA: 0 14 years on campus	N=54 CBA: 1 CED: 1 COE: 19 CHHS: 17 CLA: 9 CNSM: 6 COTA: 1 13.3 years on campus
Selected Partners <i>(Partners receive 3WTU per semester)</i>	N=5 CED: 1 CHHS: 1 CNSM: 1 CLA: 2 2 Lecturers, 1 Assistant Professor, 2 Professors 18.4 years on campus	N=4 COE: 1 CHHS: 1 CNSM: 2 2 Lecturers, 1 Associate Professor, 1 Professor 17.5 years on campus

Table 3: Data regarding Faculty Participants

	Spring 2021 Participants	Fall 2021 Participants	Combined Data
Number of Participants and Level of Participation	N=28 21 @ Level 1 7 @ Level 2	N=39 22 @ Level 1 17 @ Level 2	N= 67 43 @ Level 1 24 @ Level 2
Distribution by College	CBA: 1 CED: 1 COE: 5 CHHS: 11 CLA: 3 CNSM: 7 COTA: 0	CBA: 3 CED: 0 COE: 0 CHHS: 17 CLA: 5 CNSM: 10 COTA: 4	CBA: 4 CED: 1 COE: 5 CHHS: 28 CLA: 8 CNSM: 17 COTA: 4
Demographic Data of Participants*	N=12 <i>(7 Level 1 and 5 Level 2)</i>	N=24 <i>(13 Level 1 & 11 Level 2)</i>	N=36 <i>(20 Level 1 & 16 Level 2)</i>
Rank	10 Lecturers 1 Assistant Professor 1 Associate Professor	8 Lecturers 8 Assistant Professors 5 Associate Professors 3 Professors	18 Lecturers 9 Assistant Professors 6 Associate Professors 3 Professors
Years Experiences	2 @ 1-3 years	6 @ 1-3 years	8 @ 1-3 years

	6 @ 4-6 years 2 @ 7-10 years 1 @ 11-15 years 1 @ >15 years	7 @ 4-6 years 5 @ 7-10 years 2 @ 11-15 years 4 @ >15 years	13 @ 4-6 years 7 @ 7-10 years 3 @ 11-15 years 5 @ >15 years
Race/Ethnicity & Gender	5 Hispanic/Latinx 1 Asian 1 Asian Indian 3 men 9 women	5 Hispanic/Latinx 4 Asian 2 Asian Indian 5 men 17 women 2 prefer not to say	10 Hispanic/Latinx 5 Asian 3 Asian Indian 8 men 26 women 2 prefer not to say

* Demographic data was collected anonymously after the fact. As a result, it does not include data from all participants.

It is worth noting that faculty participants were matched with FFFP partners who work outside their departments and colleges. This helps ensure that the experience does not accidentally spill into formal evaluation or personnel decisions. Faculty have the option of sharing their participation in the project in their RTP or lecturer evaluation files, but it is their choice to do so. They are provided with a letter indicating their participation in the project.

Initial Project Impact

We are still in the stages of reviewing data for publication, but there are some comments from partners and participants that are worth sharing at this point. Feedback from spring 2021 participants fell into themes of helpfulness of the partners, value of discussions about teaching, and ability to (and willingness to) make mid-semester changes to the course based on data. A theme running through the comments indicated that the process was a safe environment in which to have these conversations.

Partners were helpful

Kudos to [partner] for being very approachable, reassuring, and affirming. I found the whole experience very positive right from the start.

The follow up meeting with my Collaborative Partner was most helpful

Talking about teaching was valuable

It is unfortunately rare to have in-depth conversations with colleagues you respect about our teaching, mostly we work alone in front of students. I signed up to participate in this program precisely for the opportunity to have these meaningful conversations, and my expectations were met! Teaching (particularly remote teaching) can be isolating! I enjoyed the opportunity to discuss my classes in a collaborative, nonevaluative setting.

The project provides a safe, collaborative environment to learn from your current lecturing practices, and to gain insight and ideas for future growth.

Changes were made (during the semester)

I made changes to the way I delivered lectures in course. I made shorter lectures that allowed for more student interaction.

The collaborative process helped me to change course preparation and implementation

I learned how to ask better questions to engage my students better.

I am encouraged/inspired to make my assignments more real world relevant for my students.

One faculty participant noted that this process is useful for making small changes but observed that bigger changes to a class take more time. The person who wrote this expressed interest in participating again during the next cycle.

A few respondents indicated that starting sooner would allow for sufficient time for reflection and implementing change. This is something we were able to do in fall 2021 as we already had trained partners. Since we were working with our first cohort of partners in spring 2021, we could not start working with participants until mid-semester.

To help the recruitment of future participants, we polled participants (at the end of the process) about what they would say to colleagues who might consider joining the project. Their comments were positive and focused on the value of getting real-time feedback from students and peers to inform instruction.

Any time you can get "another set of eyes" on your curriculum, it's worth it. This program, in particular, is a great use of your time.

Hopefully instructors are already soliciting ongoing formal feedback from students. If so, this project really helps to provide a different structure and collaborative experience for improving how instructors solicit and respond to student feedback. If instructors do not already solicit formative feedback then the project may help to provide a simple and helpful structure for beginning to implement this beneficial practice. Most importantly, the project was non-invasive and I never felt as though my teaching practices were being evaluated in a pejorative or judgmental manner.

This was a great way to get feedback from your students and for students to evaluate themselves as students before they evaluate you as an instructor.

The intent of this project is to help faculty focus on student engagement as a way to improve instruction. While we sought to build a community of practice for the team of FFFP partners involved in the work, we did not consider the role this project would play in developing faculty engagement between partners and participants. The comment from one of our veteran partners sums it up nicely. This comment came partway through fall 2021, before classroom observations and debrief conversations took place.

I find my role is more therapeutic than instructive thus far, but I think that's a good thing and key to investigating engagement. One insight is that while we're studying student engagement, we're actually encountering faculty engagement. Kinda cool, no?

Next Steps

The original hope for the project included having FFFP partners from all seven colleges. We have not yet reached that milestone (no one from COTA or CBA has served as a partner). We plan to have new cohorts of FFFP partners join the project, each cycle as a way to increase the pool of faculty who can

provide feedback on instruction. We would like to continue the project with the idea of recruiting a new cohort of FFFP partners to start in fall 2022 while keeping members of the experienced cohort. It has been valuable having experienced partners working with novice partners as they have been through a cycle of the project and have insights and expertise to share beyond what the Project Leaders share. As Partners' teaching loads vary, they may come on and off the team, but the desire is to have a core of experienced people each semester. Not only does this provide the opportunity for expert peer sharing, but it also allows us to begin work with faculty participants earlier in the semester as there are partners who are already prepared to do the work.

Spring 2022 will have the two current cohorts of partners working together as a single group serving the project. We will recruit faculty participants during weeks 1-3 and assign them to FFFP partners.

Mid-spring 2022 we would like to recruit additional partners for the 2022-2023 academic year with preference given to faculty who can work both semesters. The number we can accept would be dictated by the amount of support we have from Academic Affairs and the returning partners. By recruiting and selecting mid-semester, chairs have ample time to figure out how to cover the newly selected partner's class. (Partners get 3WTU/semester for participation.)

We have been using a book (figure 4) with our partners, *Teaching college: The ultimate guide to lecturing, presenting and engaging students* (Eng, 2017), which we believe would be beneficial to our faculty participants, especially the Level 2 participants. We have a couple of ideas for how to use this with them. One option would be to host informal book club discussions on different chapters of the book throughout the semester. Different partners and project leaders would facilitate those. Participants would be able to attend the sessions most pertinent to them. Another option is to give the book to all Level 2 participants as they start the program and use the book with them one-on-one. We recognize that this is an added cost for the project, but we like the idea of leaving participants with a resource they can come back to. This book is easy to read and provides some very usable ideas for a range of classes.

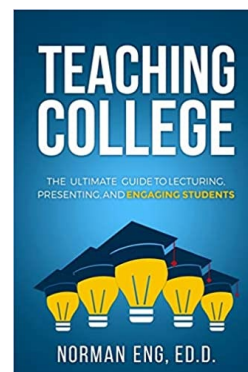


Figure 2. Book being used with Partners F2021

We believe the program developed has been successful and we want to dig into the data and do some research on the findings to date so that we can share more broadly. We are also interested in looking for external funding to continue the work.

Commitment from Academic Affairs

There are financial commitments in the form of reassigned time to faculty to make the project work. To make it clear who the key players are, we are including their position titles, descriptions of their roles, and current level of AA commitment.

Project Leaders: In addition to developing the project and protocols, the Project Leaders oversee all aspects of FFFP from facilitation of the weekly seminar meetings with partners to data review at the meta level and coordination and communication with AA. In addition to the intellectual work of the project, they also do the tasks associated with recruiting participants, creating class specific surveys for each participant, pairing participants and partners, serving as mentors to the partners as they do their work, and sending communications to participants throughout the project, up to and including a letter of participation which might be included in a performance review dossier.

There are currently three project leaders who received 3 WTU per semester.

Project Partners: FFFP partners are faculty who have been selected to work directly with faculty in the project. They participate in weekly seminar sessions in preparation for their work with faculty. They are assigned several participants each semester. The “load” varies with newer partners having more Level 1 participants and experienced partners having more Level 2. All partners have participants at both levels. They receive 3 WTU per semester for participation in the project. It is the hope that FFFP partners will serve in this role for more than one semester.

There are currently eight partners receiving 3WTU each. The number will vary this spring based on individuals’ availability and departmental needs.

Resources: AA purchased a copy of a book for each partner this year. We used the book during our seminar and with our Partners. (\$24). If we do a book club or provide this resource to Level 2 partners, there would be a cost for spring 2022.

Future Commitment: To continue the project will need to have Leaders and Partners. Ideally, we would love to have partners from each college each semester. Even though we have partners work with faculty participants outside their college (to keep this process strictly formative and non-evaluative), it would be beneficial for each college to have a member who has gone through the training and the partnering with faculty on this work. It brings back some pedagogical expertise to the college.

Recruiting a new cohort of FFFP partners for 2022-2023 who would get training in fall 2022 to add to the existing cadre of partners will allow the project to grow. The first semester we offered the project, we had 28 participants with 25% of them as Level 2. The second semester has 39 participants with 44% of them at Level 2. Level 2 participants get a much richer experience, but they also require more time from their partner. We assume that as the word spreads about the value of this project interest from faculty will grow, resulting in us needing more trained partners. Recruitment of partners for 2022-2023 will need to take place mid spring 2022.

Table 4. Project Personnel

	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2021
Project Leaders	Laura Henriques Kerri Knight-Teague Kristin Stout	Laura Henriques Kerri Knight-Teague Kristin Stout	Laura Henriques Kerri Knight-Teague Kristin Stout
FFFP Partners	Jen-Mei Chang Nancy Dayne Deborah Hamm Todd Henneman Sarah Schrank	Judy Brusslan Jen-Mei Chang Nancy Dayne Todd Henneman Susan Nachawati Laurel Richmond Sarah Schrank Kagba Suaray	Judy Brusslan Jen-Mei Chang Nancy Dayne Todd Henneman Susan Nachawati Laurel Richmond Kagba Suaray

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