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Wimmer Fellowship Reflection
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For my Wimmer Fellowship I created a class called Leadership Workshop: Ethics and Innovation. The course focused on using leadership theory and studies that were created for a traditional corporate structure and translating them to a more fluid and collaborative performing arts environment. Using a list of 21 skills/qualities of a good leader the students started the course with a diagnostic test that allowed them to score each of the skills and determine if they were weaknesses or strengths. Through out the semester we largely followed a flipped classroom model where students read outside of class and in class participated in activities and individualized assignments based on their skills scoring.

Over all I feel this class was largely successful. The major successes were in utilizing the flipped class model and in the individualized assignments. The students were exceptionally engaged in the class and the activities. They also responded well to the individualized assignments. Each student did 5 assignments. For each assignment they chose the skill they wished to further develop and I created it with tasks (interviews, journaling, readings, self assessments etc) based not only on their individual skills sets but could also tailor the assignment to their production work within the school of drama.

I think the two largest things I learned were how transparency and the flipped classroom model were incredibly engaging for the students. They came to class excited to do the work and that is largely due to the active nature of the classroom setting for this course. I also learned a great deal about earning my students buy in. Transparency in the course structure and objectives helped the students understand and connect to the relevance of the course. Using tools such as a course map and daily lesson plans with objectives that I shared with the students made it clear what the goal of daily learning was before we started. With a road map of the day and of the course they students were more successful in reaching the destination.

One other large take away from this project is the importance of connecting it to work outside of the classroom. In the school of drama students are working on productions a majority of the time. Using examples from their current work and fostering an environment in the classroom that allows them to be comfortable share their successes and failures in leading teams allowed for them to take an active and immediate role in problem solving and implementing the skills learned in class.

Working with the Eberly Center was extremely informative and beneficial. I have already implemented several resources and ideas we discussed for the Leadership class into other classes. I plan to create course maps for each of my courses. I think there are opportunities for working more of the flipped classroom activities into some of my other courses. The focus group was also very useful. It confirmed a few concerns I had about approaches I did not feel were working and created the opportunity for the students to give useful feedback, some of which I was able to implement immediately. Through out the process my advisor was available to help problem solve or offer solutions and suggestions for both this class and other teaching challenges I faced.

Overall this fellowship and working with the Eberly Center was a great boon to me in my early years here at Carnegie Mellon and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity. The support and tutelage during the process of creating this course from scratch allowed me to learn lessons that might have taken several semesters of teaching the course to learn. I look forward to utilizing the Eberly Center in the future for brainstorming ideas and seeking advice on course design and teaching related issues.