

Eberly Center

Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation

To: Confidential to Molly McCarter, Assistant Teaching Professor, Drama
From: Heather Dwyer, Teaching Consultant
RE: Early Course Feedback, Focus Group Report
Date: March 1, 2016

Six students participated in the student feedback session for your course, 54-360: Leadership Workshop – Ethics and Innovation. After explaining the process to the class, I assigned students into pairs. In their pairs, students filled out feedback forms with two general questions: What are the strongest features of this course and my teaching? What specific suggestions do you have for changes that I can make to improve your learning? Per your request, I also specifically asked them to comment on 1) the usefulness of the historical content, and 2) the helpfulness of the course structure. Students wrote down the points upon which they agreed; other points were discussed and clarified in the pair. After eight minutes of paired discussion, I asked for the key points from the paired discussion, and -- by a show of hands and further whole class discussion -- determined the extent to which each point had agreement. On the following pages, the main points listed are those generated in the whole class discussion and those commonly cited in the feedback forms. Additional supporting and clarifying bullet points came from the group worksheets and whole class discussion.

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Summary of Student Feedback:

Strengths that assist in learning:

Homework assignments are personalized

- Students choose leadership trait to focus on; instructor designs assignment for the student based around that trait
- Allows for both personal and professional development
- Makes the course feel more practical than theoretical; students can apply these traits in real life. “We have to go out and actually practice the course material” in “real time”.
- Group reflections help with synthesis of concepts and allow students to learn from each other

Case study carousel prompts students to relate course content to their past and present experiences

- Requires self-reflection and focus on practical, relevant examples
- Provides opportunity to apply theoretical content in a theatrical context

The classroom is a safe space to discuss student successes and weaknesses/failures

- Instructor fosters this; also due to the nature of the student makeup of the class. “We’re all at the same level.”

The course structure is helpful for learning

- “Due to the emotional rigor of this course, the structure is necessary.”
- “Using personal experiences and history to develop homework and thoughts are good.”

Miscellaneous comments

- “It’s nice that the history is not overdone or belabored. It’s just enough to understand the concept.” (2)
- “Workload and workflow is great! Please do not change!” (2)
- “The book lends itself to productive discussion.” (2)