Reflections on the 2005-2006 Faculty Learning Community

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I was a member of the 2005-2006 Faculty Learning Community. Susan Donavan asked us all to reflect on this experience. I found the FLC to be one of the most useful and enjoyable learning experiences I have ever had. I'll cover the major parts of the experience and provide my reflections.

Meetings:

As far as I was concerned, the group meetings were one of the high points of the FLC. The ability to meet with people from other parts of the institute to share ideas and points of view was very enlightening. I received quite a few new ideas that I could take back and try out in my courses. (Although meeting Friday mornings at 8:00 AM was a bit much.)

The level of cooperation between group members was high and I thought the group really came together during and after the Lilly Conference. People listened to other's views, even if they disagreed. I felt comfortable speaking my mind in the group.

If I had a choice, I'd select a one hour per week format. I found the two week gap between meetings a bit too long. Meeting weekly kept me moving forward, because there were readings and material to prepare for the next week. With a two week gap, it was too easy to put off the work until a couple of days before the meeting.

Readings:

I liked most of the readings, although some of them just didn't really provide a lot of immediately useful material. (That's probably the programmer in me coming out.) The sessions we did on Bloom's Taxonomy and Perry were very helpful.

I also liked the StrengthQuest approach, since it showed me a few things about myself that I didn't really know. I did not expect to score high on harmony and was very surprised responsibility was not on the list. However, looking back on past behaviors, the strengths listed make sense.

Lilly Conference:

This was the other high point of the FLC. I enjoyed the sessions and as promised, the food was excellent. The session with Barbara Millis was extremely useful and I was able to try some of ideas she demonstrated almost immediately. All of the presentations I attended were uniformly well prepared and delivered.

Project:

The project was interesting from two areas. First of all, this was the first pedagogy based research I had done, so it was a new experience. Researching approaches, developing the proposal, and talking to others who had done this type of research was very enlightening.

In addition, I was able to address an issue that has been a problem since we started doing final projects in Programming for Information Technology III back in 2002. Coming up with a potential solution was very satisfying. Of course, the sample I used was a bit small, so further tests will need to be performed.

Summary:

Overall, I consider the time in the FLC well spent and will certainly recommend that other faculty take part in this program. My only regret is that there is not an ongoing program for those of us who have gone through the FLC. Perhaps a quarterly get together where people could share what they are currently working on would help hold the graduated groups together. I'd be interested in hearing what others are doing, not just from my group, but from other groups.