
PROGRAM EVALUATION AND FACULTY TRAINING: THE RESULTS OF COMPONENT ANALYSIS

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Using the matrix developed for our program evaluation, program leaders analyzed five groups of data to improve faculty seminars for writing-intensive instruction. In this case program directors used the following data to evaluate seminars: (1) Pre- and Post-Seminar Attitude Survey on Writing Across the Curriculum; (2) solicited and unsolicited faculty evaluations of the seminar; (3) data on faculty participants; (4) writing produced in the seminar by faculty participants; and (5) seminar curriculum. Analysis of the data using the matrix yielded the following patterns of change:

1. The writing-to-learn goal and the collaborative learning-by-doing methodology were readily implemented, in spite of the fact that most participants anticipated a seminar in "what composition specialists know that we should know when we prepare to teach writing-intensive courses."

2. The needs of the discourse communities were more difficult to address because of various situational constraints—namely, the bias, training, and experience of program leaders; expectations and preconceptions of participants; and participants' lack of awareness of unique features of their own discipline's discourse. Early attempts to tap and make explicit the needs and differences of various discourse communities did not fully succeed because seminar leaders did not develop appropriate activities to help participants make explicit how the discourses of their disciplines were alike and different from other discourses.

3. The evaluation matrix helped seminar leaders understand the need to make explicit participants' tacit information about their disciplines and help students understand and master the discourse forms of the various disciplines.

4. New seminar leaders and guest speakers bring with them the biases of their disciplines.

Furthermore, the emphasis of one goal often leads to the sacrifice of another.

As a result of these changes in seminar curricula, seminar leaders are beginning to understand how preconceptions about what various disciplines do influence what writing programs are able to accomplish. As a result of the seminars, faculty participants are able to reconceptualize the courses they teach to accommodate the broader focus of collaboratively-based learning by writing.