

QEP Newsletter

Transparent Instruction in General Education and Gateway Courses for Student Success

Psychology Professor Dr. Savannah Campbell Recognized for Transparency

Dr. Savannah Campbell, Assistant Professor of Psychology, was awarded third place for the 2022-23 Quality Enhancement Plan Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award and received a \$500 stipend. Dr. Campbell was nominated by two students. One student said, “as a student in three classes with Dr. Campbell, I can confidently say that she is definitely deserving of recognition. She works tirelessly to ensure that her students succeed, and, on multiple occasions, she has proven that she will go out of her way for her students”. The student further stated, “she encourages students to think creatively and is truly just an advocate for her students”.

Dr. Campbell came to LMU in fall 2021. She had a double-major in Psychology and Journalism for her bachelor’s degree from Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). She also earned her master’s degree and doctorate degree from EKU with a program focus on rural mental health and her own research on expressive therapies. She worked in a clinical psychology setting for six years after her master’s degree, which inspired her to continue her education and earn her doctorate degree.

This summer Dr. Campbell plans to do research and teach in London, England and she stated that this

award will help with her travel expenses. She is excited about the opportunity to travel abroad.

Nominations are reviewed by a committee of faculty and scored on a number of variables based on the nomination as well as the transparent assignments. Nominations are open to full-time and adjunct faculty. Students, faculty, and staff are eligible to nominate a candidate.



Dr. Savannah Campbell, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Dr. Campbell was asked questions related to her process of creating transparent materials for the classroom. The questions and her responses are below:

Q 1: What steps did you take to modify your assignments to align with the Transparent Instruction format?

A: I was given assignments previously made for one section of Transparent Assignments (PSYC 221) as those were made by the psychology program director before I started at LMU. For my other Transparent Assignments (PSYC 222), I modeled the material after what was in the 221 ones, but made it more applicable to the students' real life experiences.

Q2: What differences are you seeing in the student homework submissions that you are receiving now as opposed to before using the transparent Purpose/Task/Criteria (PTC) format?

A: I have never used any other format than the PTC as this is my first time in a full-time faculty role. I have seen an increase in students performing better on the tasks since I've started at LMU, however.

Q3: What was the biggest challenge in this process?

A: The biggest challenge I had was creating my initial assignments for PSYC 222 having not been as experienced in education work (I'm a trained psychologist in my background). I handled that by trying to see what would make the material memorable for more than just the one day in class they did the work.

Q4: What advice or words of wisdom would you give to new faculty that are beginning to incorporate transparency into their assignments?

A: I would say be flexible and try to understand that students have all sorts of various life experiences and may not comprehend material in the same way as each other. Also, be willing to see use those differences so to help the material resonate.

Q5: Any final closing thoughts?

A: I'm very grateful for this award. I was not expecting it, nor did I seek it out. I try to help students connect to and enjoy the material I teach. I had many teachers who did that for me and if I can do that for one student a semester, my job is worth it.

Congratulations to Dr. Campbell on your outstanding faculty teaching award! LMU faculty that teach courses within the general education program and gateway classes include two transparent assignments in each of their classes. For more information about transparent instruction, contact Dr. Molly Duggan at Molly.Duggan@LMU.net.edu.

PURPOSE ~ TASKS ~ CRITERIA

2023-24 Outstanding Faculty Award Nominations



Nominations are now open for outstanding faculty using transparent instruction in the classroom. Do you know of a colleague who you think should be recognized? If so, we are seeking nominations for faculty with clear Purpose, Tasks and Criteria (PTC) in their syllabi and assignments. We want to recognize and celebrate exemplary faculty initiatives for transparent pedagogy. The 2023-24 Award nomination period is open now and ends on May 31, 2024. This is the last semester for these awards. Up to seven faculty will be recognized in the fall. First prize will receive \$1000, followed by awards of \$750, \$500, and three awards of \$250. A seventh award was created to recognize faculty that may be using transparent instruction in classes beyond the QEP. Please submit nominations at the following link:

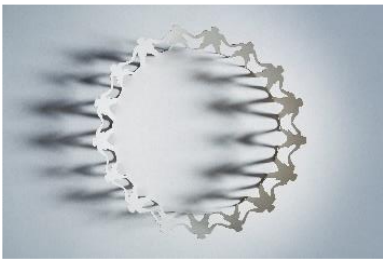


https://lmu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cwQsNGQD9a1Tt8a

Survey Reminders

The last QEP student surveys will be deployed on Sunday, April 14 and will close on Saturday, April 27, 2024. This is our last chance to capture students' perspective on the transparency of our classes. Please encourage your students to take this short, 10-question survey. In most cases, it takes students less than two minutes to complete the survey.

We use the mean scores from the surveys at the beginning and end of each semester. We use a paired sample t-test to determine if there is a significant difference between the scores. We thank you in advance for promoting this last survey!



Fall 2023 Focus Group Findings

Each semester we conduct a focus group of students and another group of faculty to discuss transparency in the general education and gateway courses. In fall 2023, six students met via a Zoom session with Ms. Sandra Southern to discuss their courses. Questions focused on at least one class that they had that semester that qualified as a QEP course. Overall, the discussion was very positive with students able to confidently identify aspects of their syllabi such as the contact information and learning objectives. A couple students commented about the “thoroughness” of their syllabi. All students thought that the assignment policies were clear and did not have any questions after reading their syllabi. All six students recalled their attendance policy and the details about what was permissible and what counted as excused and unexcused absences.

When talking about the assignments. All six students were able to articulate the purpose of their assignments and give students were able to connect their assignment to their daily life. All six students recalled the tasks and criterion for their assignments. Four of the six students were not able to compare with non QEP classes because they have only had general education classes at LMU. As a final statement, one student said, “I think overall I think the gen ed syllabus and the assignments are very clear and thorough and thank you for the opportunity and having me”. Another student said “I just like to say my professor – she is amazing. She really went through it all really well and really made it understandable and easy to get through”. Overall, the statements during the student focus group were 87 percent positive.

Below is a chart that reflects the coded responses from the student focus group:

FA23	Positive	+ %	Negative	- %	Total
Syllabus	252	86%	41	14%	293
Assignment	141	90%	16	10%	157
Total	393	87%	57	13%	450

In a separate group, Ms. Sandra Southern met with four faculty to discuss their syllabi and assignments. They all stated that they followed the syllabi template and provided the necessary contact information. They all agreed that they copy the course information and learning objectives from what is posted in the undergraduate catalog. All faculty said that they included the mission statement link from the syllabus template. One person added that they also include their academic department mission statement. All faculty stated that they included the purpose and tasks in their syllabus. One person said that they did not include the criteria in the syllabus but have it “in multiple places”... All faculty recalled their assignment and attendance policies. One person said that they even broadcast their lectures live as well as post recordings in Canvas so that students can follow

along if they cannot attend in-person classes. When comparing their syllabi to classes prior to the QEP, one person said that his current syllabi are “superior” and believes it is because of the training that he received. Another person said “it’s hard to argue against the effectiveness of having the clarity that comes from the QEP”. Another person reflected on his courses taught over the past 30-40 years and believes that his current syllabi are “very very in-depth, high quality, well thought-out, purposeful document that I think certainly enhances the course”.

When reflecting on the transparent assignments, all four faculty were able to articulate the purpose as well as tasks for their respective assignments. Three faculty included criteria. The one person that did not have a rubric said that they provide examples of the assignment questions with their students and frequently check with them in a lab setting. Three people were able to compare their QEP assignments now to prior assignments and believe that they are better. One person said, “There is clarity in terms of understanding why they received a specific grade that they got on a particular assignment. It is much more superior to what I have done previously”. One person stated “I think the depth of this is helping me be more accountable as a teacher to my students. It is providing an evidence-based outcome”.

Below is a chart that reflects the coded responses from the faculty focus group:

	Positive	+ %	Negative	- %	Total
Syllabus	338	95%	17	5%	355
Assignment	207	93%	16	7%	223
Total	545	94%	33	6%	578

In closing statements one person said, “I think we are being able to provide a more equitable education in thinking about outcomes”. Another person thought the process has helped courses with multiple sections to be “more consistent.” Overall, the statements during the faculty focus group were 94 percent positive.

Syllabi & Assignment Success

A team of eight faculty reviewed the syllabi and assignments for transparency of the general education and gateway courses. We scored our highest ratings during the spring 2024 semester. Using a four-point Likert Scale rubric, we would like to have all 3’s and 4’s for transparency. We exceeded our target goals for both syllabi and assignments. Below are the semester totals:

Totals	Syllabi	Totals	Assignments
173	Syllabi Received	325	Assignments Received
0	Syllabi Not Submitted	4	Courses Missing Both Assignments
18	Syllabi with low scores	11	Assignments with low scores
90%	<i>Syllabi Success</i>	97%	<i>Assignments Success</i>
80%	Syllabi Target	85%	Assignments Target

Thank you to the faculty for working so hard to make their materials as transparent as possible for our students. Thank you also to the team of eight reviewers for the time that they spent reading and scoring the documents and providing quality feedback.



Last QEP Survey Deployment

At the beginning and end of each semester, students taking a general education and/or gateway class are asked to complete a short, 10-question survey related to their specific class. The responses are in the form of a five-point Likert scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” or responding on a continuum of “Not at All” to “A great deal”.

April 14-27 will be our last time for students to take a QEP survey to respond to these questions related to the transparency of their courses. In all 20 survey collections, the highest rated question has been “Assignments are connected to course goals”. This is a very positive affirmation that the assignments really match the course outcomes and the purpose of the class. In 19 out of 20 instances, the lowest rated question has been, “This class is incorporating my interests”. This makes sense because students are often taking general education or gateway classes because it is a pre-requisite for another class, it is a developmental class, or it is a required course to satisfy a university requirement.

We have collected 35,677 surveys thus far with one more survey round to go. While we started with paper surveys in the spring 2019 semester, we moved online with the end of the spring 2020 semester due to Covid. Surveys were manually entered into Blackboard course shells in the early days, then entered using Enterprise Surveys with Blackboard, and they are now deployed completely online with Qualtrics through the Canvas platform.



Important 2024 Dates

April 12	LMU Research Day
April 14-27	End-of-Semester Surveys
April 29-May 30	Final Exams
May 31	Faculty Award Nominations Close
August 19	Fall 2024 Classes Start
September 2	Labor Day, No Classes
October 24-25	Fall Break

By The Numbers . . .

858	Student surveys returned at the beginning of spring 2024 – a drop from 2,279 at the end of fall 2023.
4.157	Average score from student surveys at the end of beginning of spring 2024 – based on a 5-point rubric – an increase of 0.138 from the end of fall 2023.
100	Percent of syllabi submitted for SP24 review.
97	Percent of assignments that scored all 3's and 4's for transparency in SP24.
90	Percent of syllabi that scored all 3's and 4's for transparency in SP24.
2	Transparent assignments that should be included in each general education and gateway course to reflect transparent instruction.

Thank you for reading the QEP newsletter. The QEP Office is located in 118 Grant Lee. If there is something you would like added to future newsletters, please email Molly.Duggan@LMU.net.edu.