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Using IDEA for Faculty Development

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As a faculty developer I work one-on-one with many faculty members. Often I am able to pull together information from a classroom observation and incorporate supporting data from the professor's IDEA SRIs for the same course. Let's look at one particular scenario and the ultimate happy result that came out of this process.

Professor Jones came to see me, distraught over her IDEA ratings. She was a new teacher and said that she was thinking of quitting teaching. She shared her IDEA SRI's with me and invited me to observe her class. After the observation, I analyzed the information I had and compiled my analysis and suggestions along with some supporting IDEA data onto a piece of paper. In this blog entrée, I'm sharing a portion of that with you.

One suggestion that emerged from the data was: **“Activities should prepare students for what is on the test. Be explicit.”**

This was corroborated by Prof. Jones' IDEA SRI's under Teaching Methods. Nos. 6,10 and 12, which were relevant to all of her selected objectives, all received very poor scores. Below this I also included two specific student comments that highlight this issue in her teaching (see below). As she and I looked at this data, she was eager to discuss organizational and teaching strategies to target these areas of need.

IDEA Teaching Methods:

- # 6 Made it clear how each topic fit into the course Rating: 2.9
- #10 Explained course material clearly and concisely Rating: 2.1
- #12 Gave tests, projects, etc. that covered the most important points of the course Rating: 3.3

IDEA Student Comments:

- “The material that was taught in class was not the material that was on the exam”
- “Things we were tested on weren't always taught in class”

I have used this method many times with struggling professors. I find that when I pull together data like this and give professors specific ways to move forward, it gives them hope. I gave Professor Jones a few other suggestions and she took my comments seriously and revamped the way she organized her class. The results from one semester to the next are nothing short of astounding. Take a look:

IDEA Progress on Relevant Objectives

**Fall
2012**

Comparison Category	A. Progress on Relevant Objectives	
	Raw	Adj.
Much Higher Highest 10% (63 or higher)		
Higher Next 20% (56-62)		
Similar Middle 40% (45-55)		
Lower Next 20% (38-44)		
Much Lower Lowest 10% (37 or lower)	35	32

**Spring
2013**

Comparison Category	A. Progress on Relevant Objectives	
	Raw	Adj.
Much Higher Highest 10% (63 or higher)		
Higher Next 20% (56-62)	58	60
Similar Middle 40% (45-55)		
Lower Next 20% (38-44)		
Much Lower Lowest 10% (37 or lower)		

When you're trying to help someone improve their teaching, having good data is a great place to start. And I'm happy to report that Professor Jones didn't quit. She decided she actually likes teaching.