Using Faculty Learning Community to Support Lecturers in High-Stakes Evaluation

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By a show of hands

? Administrators

? Assessment and/or IR

? Faculty Educational Development

? Faculty Members (primarily)

? Other

Outcomes:

We will share:

➤ Where there is a lack of support and equity in high stakes evaluations

➤ How study was designed to address equity / under-supported faculty

➤ How it contains professional development aspects

➤ What the study parameters entailed and initial results

➤ And encourage an open discussion on implications and possible applications at your institutions

Higher Education High-Stakes Evaluation

✓ Two different employment requirements

    ✓ Annual evaluation vs promotion process

    ✓ High-stakes evaluations determine reappointment and/or promotion

✓ Requirements vary by department, but common teaching artifacts include:

    ✓ Course syllabi, student evaluations, peer evaluations, course reflection, teaching philosophy statement.

✓ Evaluations conducted by the department chair, tenure/reappointment/promotion (TPR) committee, and college dean/provost.
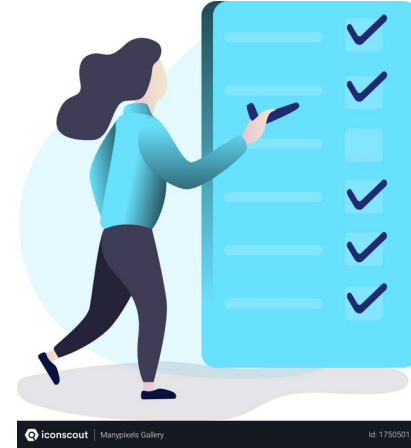
The Equity Problem

Non-tenured faculty (NTF)

- NTF comprise over half of all faculty (Chronicle of Higher Education, August 2020)
- Shorter contracts result in a higher frequency of high-stakes evaluations
  - Often one-year contracts
- Reviewed by tenured faculty

Administration

- Administrators value student and peer reviews as assessment tools (Advisory Board Company, 2012)
- Peer observers are often not trained and may bring in bias
- Student evaluations contain measurement and equity bias (Kreitzer & Cushman, 2022)

Faculty Complaints

Faculty are frustrated with:

1. Vague annual review and promotion guidelines

   "Is this exactly what they expect or am I leaving things out or…including too much?"

2. Limited peer or administrative support for collecting data and artifacts

   "My mentor spent maybe 30 minutes to walk me through the process, one time. And that was all I knew …"

3. Lack of feedback

   "…nobody ever told me if it was incorrect or correct, so I just I was just like, okay well I'm still hired so I guess, I must be doing okay."

SOLUTION Faculty Learning Community

Communities of Practice (CoP)

- A shared goal within a group of people to work to solve a problem (Wegner, 1999)

Faculty Learning Community (FLC) follows a CoP model

- Cohort or topic-based (Cox, 2004)
- Meetings occur on a regular basis with 8-12 individuals (Cox, 2004)

within each → spontaneously come together under a → Common Theme/Purpose (Joint Enterprise)

they build → Trust Among Members

in order to → Share Tacit Knowledge

thereby developing → Shared Practice

which creates → Collective Intelligence

which becomes → Implicitly held Knowledge

Community of Practice

Faculty are more motivated to participate in professional development if they can interact with others interested in improving their teaching.

(Bouwma-Gearhart, 2011)

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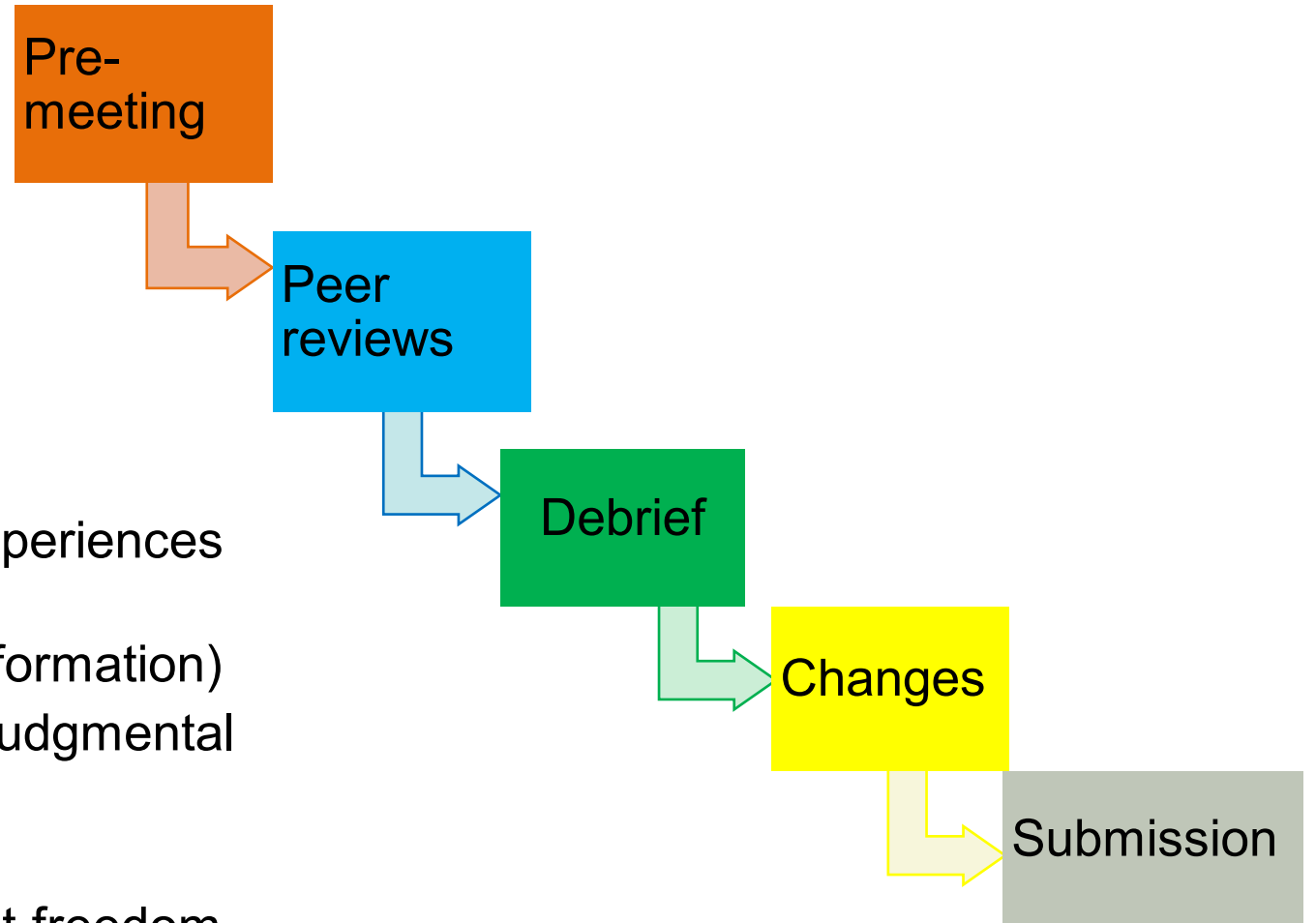
Faculty Learning Community: What does the research say?

👍 FLC have been shown to be effective platforms for professional development (Cox, 2004, Engin & Atkinson, 2015, Tinnell et al., 2019)

👍 Faculty development programs have been created for supporting teaching portfolio creation and evaluation (Seldin et al, 2010), with more success being seen from bottom-up approaches versus top down.

👍 Effective CoPs build on the collective experiences of their participants (Vangrieken, 2017)

👍 FLCs can refresh and re-energize faculty through discussions and reflection (Eddy and Garza-Mitchell, 2012)

Faculty Learning Community: Documenting Teaching Evidence through Peer Supported Review

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ARE YOU CONFIDENT IN DOCUMENTING TEACHING EVIDENCE IN DIGITAL MEASURES?

2021–22 Faculty Learning Community for College of Science Lecturers
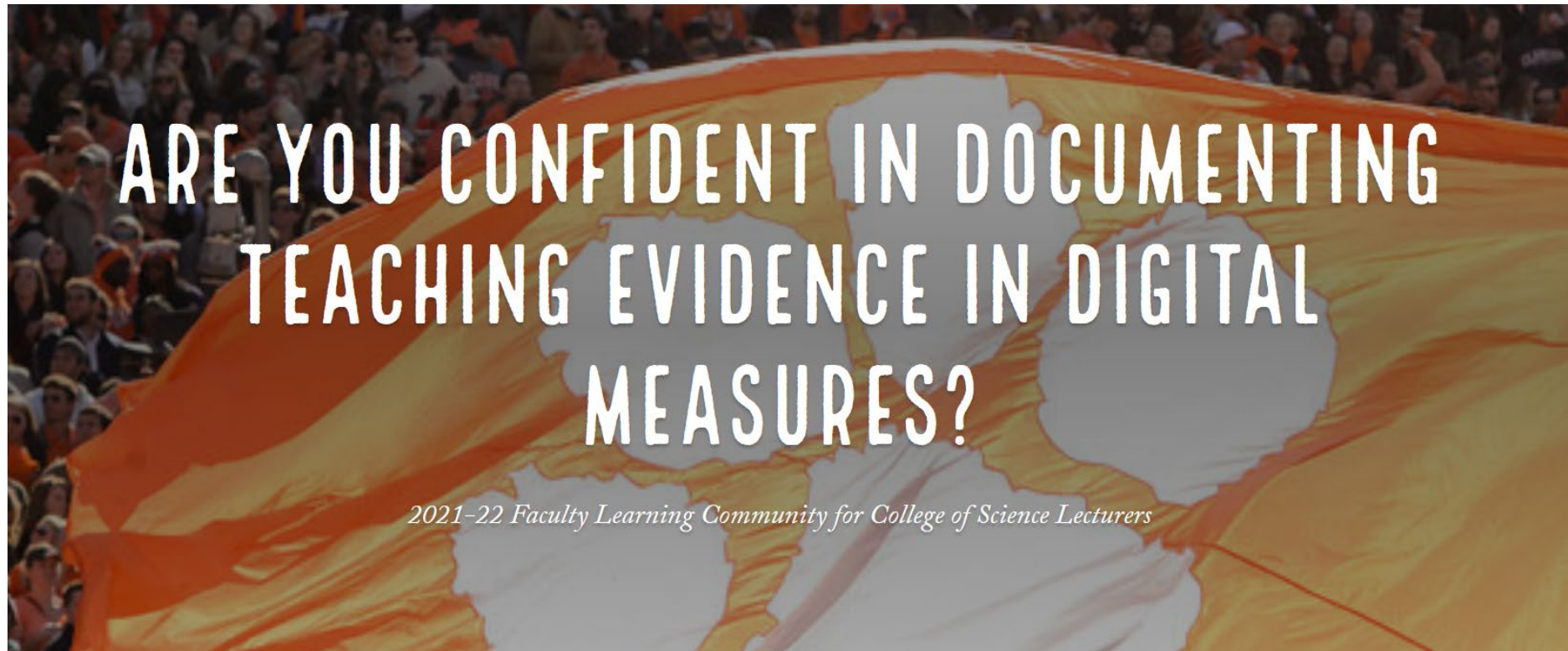
Providing Support and Feedback

Peer-supported review of teaching (P-SR)

- ✓ a peer (someone who has similar experiences and goals)
- ✓ who reviews (reads and analyzes information)
- ✓ in a supportive manner (a safe, nonjudgmental environment)
- ✓ that provides helpful feedback
- ✓ In a process that supports participant freedom

(Gosling, 2014)

Pre-meeting

Peer reviews

Debrief

Changes

Submission

HORD ET AL.'S (2008) LEARNING COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS PROMOTES EQUITY AND INCLUSION:

Supportive and Shared Leadership	Shared values, vision, and goals	Collective Learning	Shared Individual Practice	Supportive Environment
Members provide suggestions and feedback on the agenda and content.	Members gain strategies for successful submission for annual and promotion evaluations	Members discuss research and personal experiences to promote professional development	Each member selects artifacts for review and identifies desired needs.	P-SR feedback is provided in a non-judgmental manner in a timely fashion

PD Program - An FLC for non-tenured faculty

Sponsor: Office of Teaching Effective and Innovation (OTEI)

Who: Non-tenured faculty of a predetermined college received a marketing and application email. The participant selection was based on time until promotion.

Where: Each cohort met for at least 10 one-hour meetings; with virtual and hybrid options

When: Cohort 1: May-June 2021 / Cohort 2: Academic Year 21-22

How: FLC participants discuss and identify effective teaching evidence for high-stakes evaluations. Peer-supported review of teaching participation was the deliverable.

FLC Agenda

➤ Research articles to spark discussion

➤ Guest speakers

   ➤ Chair's view

   ➤ TPR process

➤ Artifact discussions/examples

   ➤ Student evaluations

   ➤ Evidence-based teaching methods

   ➤ Syllabus enhancements

   ➤ Reflective practices

   ➤ Online platform submission process

➤ Peer-supported review process

Are there any questions about our FLC's design and implementation steps?

How we will know if this is an effective professional development program

Designed-based research (DBR)

➢DBR is an iterative methodology that examines a problem, creates a probable solution/intervention, and evaluates the solution's effectiveness in an authentic, real-world implementation (MacDonald, 2008).

➢Used in education to study teaching/learning environments (Sandoval et al., 2004)
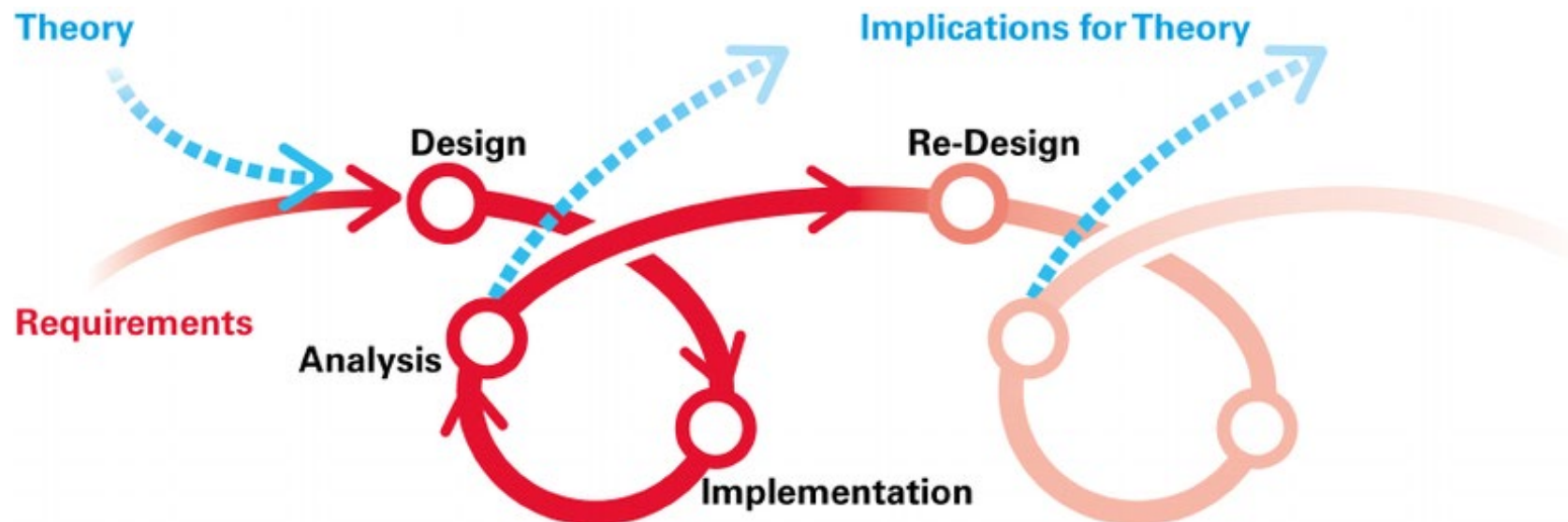
Urban Fraefel's (2014) Design-based model

Data Collection Tools

Quantitative

❑ Presurvey – Likert questions on past FLC participation and high-stakes submission self-efficacy

❑ Postsurvey – Likert questions on the comfort level in peer interaction, FLC structure, artifact review, and peer-supported review of teaching

Qualitative

❑ Semi-structured interviews – approximately 30-minute interview about:
  ▪ What was the process for submission before and after the FLC?
  ▪ Did FLC affect self-efficacy and in what ways?
  ▪ How did peer-supported review change artifacts or pedagogical methods?
  ▪ Thoughts on the combination of PS-R in an FLC.

Cohort Data:

Cohort 1

👍 10 participants with two people with FLC experience

    👍 5 Senior Lectures

    👍 5 Lecturers

👍 No participants had P-SR experience

👍 Presurvey submission self-efficacy

    👍 Very confident = 1

    👍 Somewhat confident = 6

    👍 Unsure about submission = 3

Cohort 2

👍 10 participants with only one person with FLC experience

    👍 3 Senior Lectures

    👍 7 Lecturers

👍 No participants had P-SR experience

👍 Presurvey submission self-efficacy

    👍 Very confident = 0

    👍 Somewhat confident = 5

    👍 Unsure about submission = 5

Survey results

Prior to FLC

💬19 out of 20 participants indicated they were unsure or somewhat confident in what they uploaded represented their teaching ability.

After FLC completion, all participants agreed or strongly agreed:

💬They felt supported by FLC members

💬Gained insight into other pedagogical methods

💬PS-R provided a more comprehensive picture of teaching

💬PS-R created more detailed artifacts

💬Increased confidence that submission represents teaching ability.

Post Survey Quote:

"I'm very much a "sounding board" person, so I always tend to find value in talking through documents or sharing feedback in the peer-review process. Having a second set of eyes on something increases my confidence because I know I'm not relying solely on my own expertise and experience!

The exercise of writing and reviewing statements of teaching philosophies was particularly helpful, because it helped me articulate many of the things I believe about teaching for which I didn't previously have the words. That was also a confidence-booster of sorts because it helped me solidify who I am as an educator."

Interviews
Qualitative Analysis
Colaizzi's Method

1. Multiple reading of the transcripts
2. Identifying significant statements that pertain to the phenomenon
3. Formulating meanings from statements
4. Aggregating meanings into the cluster and emergent themes
5. Developing exhaustive descriptions of the phenomenon
6. A fundamental structure is a summary of the phenomenon
7. Participant validation of the study findings completes the analysis

(Colaizzi, 1978)

Step 1
Ten interviews were watched and reviewed

Step 2
Coding software extracted statements and they were organized in Excel files

Steps 3-5
An outside researcher validate meanings, themes and descriptions

Step 7
Met with interview participants to validate findings

Interview Perception and Confidence Themes

Pre-FLC self-efficacy contained doubt	Participation improved process self-efficacy	Perceived new artifacts better represented teaching ability
*Online platform caused anxiety and confusion	*Self-efficacy with using online platform improved	*Feedback prompted revisions to promote clarity
*Self-efficacy in the process was not high	*Increased self-efficacy with showcasing artifacts for review	*Examples were beneficial for comparison to own work
*Lack of guidelines, examples, and feedback affected self-efficacy	*Fellow member support positively impacted process self-efficacy	*Insight on how to improve documentation created feelings of improved products
	*Developed knowledge and skills in documenting teaching effectiveness	*FLC didn't change the process for gathering artifacts

An Exhaustive Description example

The FLC participants increased submission/artifact confidence due to many components of the FLC and PSR process. They spoke about the value of FLC discussion surrounding resources provided and peer prior experience. These supportive teaching effectiveness conversations encouraged reflection of prior attempts, enhanced artifact knowledge and vocabulary, and validated previous teaching and submission efforts.

For those who had limited support, PSR provided the desired artifact examples and feedback. The extent of the self-efficacy increase was dependent on where they were in the promotion cycle, career stage, departmental politics, and personal motivation to put in the time and effort.

Peer Supportive Review Findings

Participants noted

- More mental awareness for documentation improvement
- Better understanding of what constitutes teaching effectiveness
- Found value in reflecting on struggles and improvement.

Changes in the teaching practices for a few participants:

- Incorporated interactive activities
- Improved course organization and written communication
- Experimented with new teaching methods

Changes in dossier artifacts

- Some made only minor changes
- Others noted changes to their teaching philosophy, syllabus, and other teaching portfolio items.

Study conclusions to take to participants

✓ Recognizing the problem – validating their frustrations and realizing other have similar feelings/struggles

✓ FLC provided – peer experience discussions, a support network, a place to exchange teaching ideas

✓ PS-R provided – a willing reviewer, motivation for improved artifacts, peer examples, desired feedback, improved artifact satisfaction

 ✓ Participation barriers include time and not finding the right peer
 ✓ Motivation was dependent on career and promotion factors

✓ Faculty had comfort in not being alone to figure out the process and had increased self-efficacy in submission

How can our experience help you?

If you have had a similar experience or have questions – we'd love to hear from you!

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Extra slides

Example of Linking tools to DBR: Presurvey

Data Sources	Planning Design Implementation		Analysis Method	Implications for Theory
Pre- FLC Qualtrics survey – prior to the start of FLC	1. Prior experience can help us understand participants 2. Obtain IRB consent	1. Listed frustrations can be addressed. 2. If reported negative FLC or P-SR experiences, steps can be made not to repeat previous experience mistakes	Provides baseline for self-efficacy	N/A
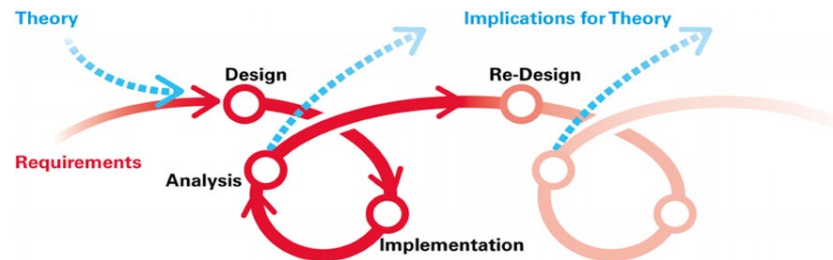
Post survey results

Q1 - When reflecting on your FLC peer interaction, please complete the following statements.

	Strongly/ Disagree		Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
I feel supported by the other participants in this cohort.	0	0	0	4	14	18
I feel comfortable seeking out my fellow FLC members for assistance with TPR artifacts.	0	0	0	2	15	17
I feel comfortable actively seeking out my fellow FLC members for assistance with other teaching areas.	0	0	0	3	14	17

Q2 - When reflecting on the structure of the FLC, please complete the following statements.

	Strongly /Disagree		Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
The frequency of synchronous meetings was enough to feel comfortable with the process of peer-supported review.	0	0	0	7	11	18
The pacing of the peer-reviews was appropriate for time allotted.	0	0	1	8	9	18
The resources provided were helpful in creating more detailed reflections of my courses and pedagogy skills.*	0	0	0	1	7	8
The FLC during the academic year was an ideal time to work with others on my Digital Measures requirements.**	0	0	0	5	3	8
The FLC during May and June was an ideal time to work with others on my Digital Measures requirements.**	1	0	0	3	6	10

Q3 - When reflecting on your artifact development and peer-supported review, please complete the following statements.

	Strongly/ Disagree		Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
My artifacts are more detailed due to the feedback I received during the peer-review process.	0	0	2	7	9	18
Peer-supported review of submission material helped me to be more confident about my role as a teacher.	0	0	2	10	6	18
I have gained insight into other pedagogical methods through the peer-supported review process.	0	0	2	6	10	18
Peer-supported review of teaching artifacts provided a more comprehensive picture of my teaching.	0	0	0	8	10	18
Peer-supported review of teaching artifacts provided a more comprehensive picture of my professional responsibilities.	0	0	3	11	4	18
Participating in peer-supported review was more beneficial than reviewing the artifacts on my own.	0	0	0	6	12	18

* Question added after first cycle to get more feedback   **Questions relate to specific timing of the cohort