

Workshop: Training Student in Responsibility for Their Own Learning: True Student Centered Learning Programs

Peter Shull
Penn State Univ., pjs18@psu.edu

Abstract - I often hear faculty speak of students not taking responsibility. We all have students who do not read the assignments, miss or turn in incomplete homework, or do not actively participating in lab assignments and still expect a good grade! Simply put, more and more students are not taking responsibility for their own learning. But I don't believe that the reason is because students don't want to do so. My question is "So, what are we (faculty) going to do about it?" Usually the answer I get is "It's their responsibility, they are in college!" This common faculty response reminds me of Einstein's definition of insanity:

"Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." Albert Einstein

This highly interactive workshop is about doing something different—providing faculty with proven tools that instill student responsibility for their own learning. The workshop will focus on pragmatic and effective methods that create a clear and common understanding of what is meant by student responsibility for learning. It will clarify both effective and ineffective behaviors of both students and faculty, and how to instill these skills. Specific active and experiential lessons will be presented in a highly animated format.

The methods used rely on common engineering tools such as the engineering design process—although here it is used as a metacognitive learning tool. This direct connection to engineering increases buy-in from students who are reluctant to learn “non-engineering” material and increase the ease for faculty to teach the material.

In our implementation of these methods, we have found benefits to both students (e.g., increased student engagement/learning and more effective teamwork) and faculty (e.g., increased coverage of material and a dramatic decrease in student complaints).

This workshop is for anyone who believes “I know students can do better, I just don’t know how to make it happen.” Or for those who simply want to dramatically reduce student complaints or excuses in a positive way.