

Northwest PULSE 2013 Follow up Survey

Page: Participant Questions

Q1 - Untitled Question		Question ID: 95854
Text Response		ElementID: 163689
1. What is the most significant new idea or concept that you learned at this NW PULSE meeting?		
	Text Responses (click to view)	Count: 28, Percent: 96.55%
	Viewed Question	29
	Skipped Question	1, 3.45%
Text Response		ElementID: 163690
2. What did you learn at this NW PULSE meeting that reinforced something you may have already learned?		
	Text Responses (click to view)	Count: 26, Percent: 89.66%
	Viewed Question	29
	Skipped Question	3, 10.34%
Text Response		ElementID: 163691
3. What activity at the NW PULSE meeting was the most useful to you and your team and why?		
	Text Responses (click to view)	Count: 28, Percent: 96.55%
	Viewed Question	29
	Skipped Question	1, 3.45%
Text Response		ElementID: 163692
4. Did the workshop help your team create an action plan that you think will be effective when you return home? Please explain.		
	Text Responses (click to view)	Count: 28, Percent: 96.55%
	Viewed Question	29
	Skipped Question	1, 3.45%
Text Response		ElementID: 163693
5. What suggestion do you have to improve future NW PULSE meetings?		
	Text Responses (click to view)	Count: 28, Percent: 96.55%
	Viewed Question	29
	Skipped Question	1, 3.45%
Text Response		ElementID: 163694
6. Other comments?		
	Text Responses (click to view)	Count: 17, Percent: 58.62%
	Viewed Question	29
	Skipped Question	12, 41.38%

Text Responses

Q1 - Untitled Question	[question top]
1. What is the most significant new idea or concept that you learned at this NW PULSE meeting?	[return to element]
leverage points and systematic thinking.	
Ideas for "systems change". This really put into perspective some of the potential roadblocks to making changes at a department, school or college level.	
The system approach.	
The concepts of systems analysis, formally, were new to me.	
Metacognition.	

While not the focus of the workshop, I used the systems role play game "Triangles" to help students get a sense of how when one electron moves it initiates a moving chain reaction among the other electrons. Using your rubric to analyze our departmental offerings, we became more aware of our deficiency in offering experiential and extracurricular learning opportunities for students.

For me it was a mechanism/systems approach to making changes to our curriculum. Starting with goals, objectives, mission and then using the Vision and Change document to help us achieve them.

Systems thinking! These ideas from Nalani were revolutionary to me (the iceberg model, thinking of leverage points, strategies of a system thinker). Seeing these ideas visually from Claire, really helped solidify the information too.

Learning about the PULSE fellows was important - I never fully understood the concept before this workshop.

Too many to pick one! I guess one thing I will take with me is how to approach new ideas within the department - to always consider the overall visions, and to start small with individual projects. Also, to remember not to re-invent the wheel: someone out there probably has just the solution/activity/etc. that you are looking for

It is a process that requires starts and stops to get a plan from a team. Our team worked well together. I hope that other teams experienced a similar evolution, but I can see if members are not open to the process that a team would not have gotten very far from their initial starting place.

Although I realize now that I do think of some things as systems, being formally introduced to systems thinking and leverage points was very cool.

Probably leverage points as a concept (and the related ideas about what it means to change a system, and why it can be hard). I still have lots and lots of work to do on really understanding them, let alone recognizing and using them, but it's a good first step.

Also, the experience of consciously adopting an abundance attitude was revolutionary for me, and really helped me think outside some rigid boxes that have been built into my departmental culture. I am hoping to bring this idea back to my colleagues, though I anticipate some significant resistance.

The core content for biology majors that was distributed by the UW postdoc. It was helpful to see a detailed list of what university and community college faculty expect in the majors sequence.

I have not had much experience with systems approaches and found this useful. I will explore ways to apply to our department and college.

I really liked the document that Sara Brownell shared. It nicely laid out the relationship between course/curriculum structure and V&C core concepts.

the NW PULSE website has a large array of resources for faculty success.

It's hard to say, because we are well into our curriculum revision process, and so we had read the vision and change document before. Also, we had independently come to many of the same ideas. The graphical facilitator was a really interesting thing.

The idea of leverage points was useful in allowing us to more clearly identify ways to modify our curriculum.

I think it would be a deeper understanding of metacognition. I had an intuitive understanding of it, but have never had it clearly defined previously.

Considering leverage points when looking for change.

I was impressed by how similar the goals are for different types of institutions across the board (i.e. R1 university, regional comprehensive, liberal arts, community college), and learned that strategies for initiating change at one institution can potentially be applied at another institution.

The handout that expanded and categorized the core concepts in PULSE was the most significant piece.

It was good to go through a formal, iterative process to develop an action plan.

Using the iceberg model when thinking about systems and barriers to change - trying to foster that deeper understanding.

Although it wasn't entirely new, the information I gained about systems thinking was the most useful.

We were already on this road, so nothing was eye opening to me. The "leverage" points were new to me and helpful, though. Our plan (below) will be focusing on information flow.

The systems thinking and approach to change.

2. What did you learn at this NW PULSE meeting that reinforced something you may have already learned?

[\[return to element\]](#)

that it is important for student learning that we as instructors pursue data based mechanisms for changing the classroom

This workshop reinforced the idea that change needs "buy in" from multiple individuals. Having us work in teams from each institution really helped feel like we're not in this alone.

I was familiar with the V&C document, but this workshop was very good to reinforce all the ideas discussed in the document.

The benefits of collaboration were reinforced at this meeting.

For years I have given my students a list of 6 "Key Concepts" list that almost perfectly matches the 5 "Core Concepts" in the V and C report. Interestingly, the extra concept is "Hierarchies and Scaling" which more or less appears at the bottom of the grid that Sara Brownell developed.

Using your rubric to analyze our departmental offerings, we became more aware of our strengths as a department. We control content without administrative demands, our department members communicate well, and most of our faculty use active-learning strategies. So, this activity

helped to give us confidence that our department is heading in the right direction.
there really are a lot student centered educators out there and really like being part of that community.
The need to move toward process and key concepts and away from what is too much content.
The ideas around the community of practice. It was a good reminder that even though I sometimes feel very isolated in my home institution, I am not alone and there is a much wider and broader community into which I need to tap.
I had briefly read through some of the rubrics earlier in the summer, but it was useful to think about how they could be used to effect change on a department/institution level.
The importance of implementation of the Vision & Change document
That our course outcomes should touch on the core concepts and competencies.
An outside facilitator can take pressure off the local leader and get a team of people to work together better.
That our department is doing well in some areas but not in others. It was nice to get confirmation.
I was reminded that change is ongoing. I had bought into our departmental mindset that we needed to make sure our Big Curriculum Change was right so that we didn't have to change it again. It's was helpful to be reminded that this isn't likely to be a productive way to think about change, both because aiming for perfection the first time out is paralyzing, and because it's just not realistic (or good!) to strive toward a static outcome.
Inquiry learning is effective. Although many courses in our department engage students in inquiry, we need to work with all faculty to facilitate its incorporation throughout the curriculum.
The wealth of colleagues in the area that have great enthusiasm and resources for teaching.
"Flipping the classroom" will work to improve student success.
Again, since we are already deeply in our curriculum revision, it wasn't new, but it was great to see that there are many people committed to curriculum change.
The importance of identifying learning goals before trying to develop an assessment.
I enjoyed the refresher on systems thinking and the idea of leveraging resources for maximum impact. I would love to learn more about system dynamics.
Systems are resistant to change.
Assessment is key to be able to initiate and track changes to curriculum.
I realized that we were covering every topic that appeared on the handout that expanded and categorized the core concepts in PULSE.
Applying systems thinking to an organization.
That it is possible, and that we need to, do a better job working across levels.
Having the concepts versus content argument reaffirmed in multiple different ways is strong incentive to make curricular changes and classroom changes. The workshop was motivating for my teaching practices, but I still don't know all the tricks and techniques I'd like to know.
That the recent changes we had implemented in our program were on course to take us in the proper direction. I suspected this more then something I knew before the conference, however.
3. What activity at the NW PULSE meeting was the most useful to you and your team and why? [return to element]
the activity related to building an action plan- and going through the rubrics to determine our areas that need immediate attention
I think creating the five year "Big Dreams/Plans" and also the goals for the end of the academic year was extremely useful. We felt like we left the workshop with a specific plan for what to work on back at our department. The rubrics are also extremely useful as a model for how to assess our classes, majors, etc. We are already planning on assessing our intro Biology classes and now we have a template to build from.
What do you want your department to be in 4 years. Dream big! We did dream big, and obviously some of those goals we came up with are not achievable. However those goals do signify directions we want to go and clarified where our emphasis should be.
The time devoted to thinking about a specific task with my colleagues was the most beneficial. I also appreciated interacting with colleagues and learning from them (formally and informally). I guess that's two activities...
Going through the rubrics with my team to identify dept. deficiencies.
Using rubrics helps to focus thinking. Without the initial rubric activity, we likely would have made little progress in finding a common goal to promote within our department. Once the rubric was done, a common goal jumped out at us.
The two posters: The vision (magazine cover) was fun and creative and helped us put goals and dreams out there.
The action plan then helped us be more systematic and logical in approach to moving in the direction we would like to see our dept. program go.
I was a little hesitant when we saw the schedule that we were going to have so much group time. But we needed every minute of it! It was great to have such a long uninterrupted time to work and brainstorm and build on ideas. I also really appreciated all of the opportunities to network

socially, with the poster session, and the "interest groups" at the end. I think that this was also very helpful to our team because we know that we are not alone as we go forward.

Probably the creation of the action poster.

Going over the rubrics, because it generated our list of project ideas.

Getting away from home for a concentrated time of work proved the most useful. We get bogged down with competing ToDo lists when at home.

The visioning exercise followed by the realistic planning were awesome.

The "headline" activity was great for getting us to think big, dream, and get creative with wild and crazy ideas- -which got us out of our ruts. Those ideas weren't realistic/achievable at all, but it was a very positive experience, and one that helped us see big points of commonality among our visions.

The action plan is probably the most useful thing we did as it gives us a clear direction for the coming year. It was also useful to see how much we needed assessment (a need that underpinned our action plan)- -I don't remember exactly how that became such a strong theme for our action plan, but I think it probably came out of the rubric analysis. That was unexpected- -I didn't go to this workshop expecting to think so much about assessment.

Team time.

Both the visioning exercise and developing the action plan were very useful.

I found reviewing the rubrics with my team members to be very useful.

Getting together with colleagues at the end of the meeting to set up work groups on topics (i.e. the pedagogy literature journal club).

Going over the rubrics was a really helpful exercise.

Having structured time with colleagues to identify areas of improvement and creating a plan of action.

I thought it all worked together to create a very effective conference. If I had to single out one event or activity that struck me the most, it may be the systems triangle game. I will be using that in future meetings and retreats.

Going through the rubrics was most useful because it really opened up a conversation about the department, the degree, what we are doing well and what we know that we are not doing well.

Time given to us to work in groups towards a specific goal - especially because we know we will be responsible for following through!

Networking time with my team was very useful and talking to other faculty to realize that they have similar or worse problems was also a relief.

Developing the action plan.

Surprisingly, the visioning approach. At first I thought that it was somewhat "silly," however by the end of the weekend I realized that it was extremely useful for my team's discussion related to the changes we aim to make.

I think the visioning exercise was really helpful. It helped us collectively arrive at an agreed upon objective. Now we have a specific set of goals to work towards.

Working through the curriculum alignment rubrics to help us see what we are doing well and where we need improvement.

We came away with an action plan to apply to our biology program. The time together to carefully think and discuss this was priceless.

4. Did the workshop help your team create an action plan that you think will be effective when you return [\[return to element\]](#) home? **Please explain.**

yes i believe we will be able to enact the items we planned on having done by may.

We created what we hope is a reasonable plan for this spring. Our team has already met and scheduled time at the next department meeting to discuss our goals for this academic year.

Yes. I think the teamwork was very useful for us, as we worked well together and were riding the high wave of energy created by the PULSE team. We realized that making progress in assessment is paramount in moving forward.

Yes, this workshop was very useful and effective. Our team was able to build on existing plans to make a more nuanced and, we think, effective action plan that is very doable.

Yes. We chose 3 rubric items with low scores to address to improve student success. We will implement remedies during Winter term and report at NW Bio.

Yes. The time away gave us time to focus on a plan that we can bring back to the department. Because of the time we had to explore the plan, we could spend time thinking about obstacles and what will need to be done to begin removing them.

I do. There is already support at our institution for doing this. I think you really helped us come up with an approach for creating momentum, change and execution.

Yes! We are excited to start to build on our action plan and put it into work. What is particularly effective is that we have to be accountable to each other and to the NWBIO workshop in May 2014. Having a time line to do something is brilliant!

Yes, I believe so. The workshop actually served to give us both time together as well as motivation for creating an action plan that we're committed to implementing.

Yes, we will definitely be completing our project - it was actually something we had to do for our department already, we simply restructured it align with the core concepts.
Yes, our plan was actually well-received by our dean and the assessment team for the college. The people in Institutional Research are now interested in getting some better student assessment data, which is part of our plan.
Yes. We developed something that get the departmet moving in the right direction in those areas that need work. AND, it id doable.
Yes. We were realistic with our action plan, taking into account our department's work for the year (and the personalities in it). But the action plan does lay out very clear, focused things for us to do- -and ones that I think will move us forward in working on our curriculum redesign.
It helped, but the action plan for our team did not need so much time.
I think so. We developed a plan to address the different rubrics at upcoming meeting as a planning process for a retreat to be held prior to May 2014. We will be submitting a proposal for a small grant to help support this process. My only concern is that administrative decisions might take "the wind out of our sails".
Yes. We had talked for a while about aligning our introductory courses with each other and with V&C, but this is the first time we made concrete progress. We have shared this with our other faculty, and everyone is on board.
Most definitely. We came away with definable and attainable goals. We came away with realistic as well as 'pie in the sky' goals. Being given the deadlines of May 2014 as well as October 2017, we were able to define some short and long term goals for our department.
Yes. we are going to go over the rubric with the faculty since we are in the process of revamping our curriculum, and hopefully lead them into thinking about where in each of their own individual courses we can cover some of the areas we are currently lacking in.
Yes. As mentioned above, it was very useful. Especially having other faculty from other institutions to talk with about their experiences.
Yes, I feel our team came away with realistic goals that are achievable in the established timeframe. Our chair will be encouraging the rest of the department to engage with the plan.
Yes, I believe that the workshop helped solidify a few parts of our plan and really made us think about the details.
Yes, I think that we developed a plan that is both manageable and worthwhile. It was helpful to think about our large goals, and then pare them down to steps that we can take in the next six months.
Somewhat.
Perhaps. We are a subset of the department and a subset of the instructors teaching students in both majors and nonmajors paths. Significant systematic changes will require more than us. So, our action plan involves getting a better feel for how the department as a whole feels about V&C and how we're doing. We're hoping that soliciting their input will provide enough buy-in for them to make some changes. Otherwise, changes are likely to be seen in the classes taught by individual faculty, but not system-wide.
Definitely! We rarely have time to develop new plans at home, so found the time extremely vaulable. Our plan is already in the works, and we cannot wait to see how it all develops.
Well, we'll see! I think we were conservative enough about what we thought we could accomplish that we do stand a good chance of succeeding.
Yes. I will be leading my department through the rubric exercise so that we can determine what we are doing well and what we need to improve. We are in the midst of curriculum revision already, but this will help us focus our efforts.
Very definitely yes. The problem is that now we are back our time is consumed by the day-to-day commitments of our respective jobs. It is hard to break out of this seemingly frantic mode to keep the pressure on for action plan progress.
5. What suggestion do you have to improve future NW PULSE meetings? [return to element]
more meaningful assessment of activities and where the groups are at- fist to five/ word that describes where your at etc.. didn't effectively allow me to verbalize needs (more time, better direction, less direction...etc.)
I would have liked a little more social time to get to know folks at other institutions.
It was very good. I told to all my colleague that it was surprisingly good and useful. It would be great to have specialized workshops, e.g. assessment, introductory courses. I think the PULSE groups will help, but a similar workshop would be even better.
The format, facilitators, and activities of the meeting was fantastic. I also appreciated the flexibility of the team in adjusting the agenda when necessary. A focus on assessments would be beneficial at future meetings. Perhaps some more structured time to work with other teams would be useful.
Working more directly with the PULSE Toolkit - - that was one of the goal statements for this meeting, but we never had a formal session. I'd like more time to see what's working for others and what resources they access.
I was not certain of the purpose of the workshop. A more concrete statement of predicted workshop outcome or workshop focus would have been helpful. The facility and meals were excellent sites for networking and reflection time needed to develop plans.
A bit more time with our coaches in developing action plans. Maybe rotation of coaches with particular areas of expertise/strength. These could be in changing groups of 2-3 teams for example.
I understand and appreciate the community building but the best work was really accomplished in the smaller groups. Maybe a few too many ice breakers scattered throughout. I am more uncomfortable doing that then actually being placed in a group and working, or being asked to come up with an idea to work with people on etc.

It was so excellently put together that I don't have any suggestions. Timing, speakers, location, activities, visuals--they were all excellent. I think it was so smart to bring in non-biologists who are experts in system thinking. This made for a much more powerful workshop.

I'd love to have more concrete ideas about engaging classroom activities but I guess that wasn't really the purpose of this meeting.

Longer time period to go over the rubrics.

At our college, we have a professional development activity in which you move around to stations, 5 minutes per station, and an instructor explains an activity that they do in class - perhaps one that chooses some specific activities that really hit at some core concepts and competencies.....

Some regional and/or institutional similarities and sharing time mid-way would perhaps help seed ideas in other teams that they could incorporate in their final plan.

I thought the meeting was well thought out and organised. I felt rushed the whole time so maybe it could have been longer. However, it was certainly nice to be able to go and come back while missing only one day of courses.

While I greatly appreciated the time to work with my team, I would have liked a few more formal "mixing" activities to help me network with people from other institutions. Partly because I'm reserved, I mostly talked to my team or people I already knew. One way to do this could be to set up "topic tables" at meals to encourage people to sit with folks who weren't from their team. (A department chair's workshop I attended did this, and it was very successful.)

Fewer lectures. More team and inter-team time on challenges. More tangible discussion of class sizes, lab times and instructor involvement across the different-sized institutions.

Given that assessment seems to be a perennial stumbling block when working on curriculum reform, I would have liked to have more attention to this. Might reduce time spent on pre-workshop survey.

Saturday was a pretty long stretch. Maybe carry a little more over to Sunday. It was great to see other people's posters on Sunday, but we could have done a little more then and had a shorter day on Saturday.

Hold the meetings in the summer and not during the academic year. Taking time out of the semester is difficult for faculty at smaller liberal arts institutions.

Don't have activities late into the evening. It would have been better to have people arrive on Thursday night and start on Friday morning, and be done after dinner each day. That would leave more time for informal interactions both within teams and between teams, and also allow more time for reflection and processing of all the information.

It might also have been interesting to mix up the seating arrangements, since people do generally return to the same seat at the same table. You could organize tables by where groups are in the process or geographically or randomly, that would allow more diverse interactions.

I congratulate the organizers on doing a great job making it a welcoming, enjoyable, and productive experience. I would recommend that they reduce the amount of time spent at the end in showing pictures of the attendees and going over how people felt about the conference.

Nothing stood out as deficient, it was a great conference!

The timing was a bit rough. We know as educators that there is only so much a person can take in at one time. I think it might have helped to start a bit earlier on the Friday and be able to be finished by dinner each evening.

I also think that even though we have all been given a copy of the Vision and Change document and many have read it. I think a discussion/presentation of what has been done in different departments around the country already in regards to making these changes would have been inspiring.

One of the most well-organized and effective conferences I have been to - no suggestions for improvement!

Bring institutions that are more similar together and focus on contents.

I think that fewer interruptions for group activities may have allowed us to be more productive.

Loved the approach! Perhaps it would be nice to have heard more from the other teams who were there, specifically what challenges they each face at their institutions and what successes they have had in their program related to systems change.

I actually thought it was a pretty good format and there was enough but not too much to do. I enjoyed having the time to work in our groups, that's what we generally DON'T have time for at home.

I would like to see an agenda that does not have us meeting again after dinner, as I am too exhausted by then to get anything out of it.

None. Very informative and enjoyable.

6. Other comments?

[\[return to element\]](#)

Thank you for all your work! Thank you for the opportunity!

Fantastic workshop! It was practical, well-organized, good scope of activities. Thank you for giving us time to work as teams on our plans and posters. Great venue, great presenters, great food :) Overall, a very positive experience and I would recommend it to any colleagues who are interested in undergraduate biology education.

Thank you! I really appreciate your work and commitment to reforming college biology education.

This was a well-run, active, and useful meeting. I appreciate that we left with an action plan. The meeting provided a good mix of theoretical and practical instruction, reflection, and activities. The energy of the meeting was great and I enjoyed meeting new colleagues and establishing ties with them. The poster session was very beneficial and I look forward to seeing those posters that I did not have a chance to view due to time constraints. I really liked Claire's visual representations of the discussions.

Great facility and facilitator, good food, great networking. Good job!
All of my team members were not 100% on board with the workshop, but I think each team member benefited from the experience. Without this workshop we probably would not have taken the time to formulate a plan to meet our goal of increasing experiential and extracurricular learning opportunities for students.
Thanks, I was pleasantly surprised. Most productive workshop I have attended. I appreciated your presentations as being well thought out, on topic, direct and succinct. None of the fellows was into hearing themselves talk. I like the format of short presentations then activity. Great work.
I would love to see this workshop be replicated next year as well. One of the PULSE fellows told me that only about 1/2 of the schools that applied were able to attend. That means that there's another community of practice waiting to get going! Using NWBIO as a platform is excellent because it extends that meeting beyond the traditional community college faculty which have been the bulk of the organization. (I am, however, guessing that many of you may not want to plan and organize another meeting of this size, but maybe a call for the next group of budding pulse fellow) . Thank you for all your hard work!
It would be great to have a compilation of resources that would serve to teach people about specific activities that would further Vision & Change. One logistics item (minor): it would be nice to tell people just to eat breakfast at the hotel if offered. They had a lovely hot breakfast that was quite convenient but I got the impression the organizers wanted everyone to eat on-site. But since everyone was separated based on where they stayed it ended up being fragmented.
It was mostly great! The only criticism I have is the final reflections on Sunday were a bit redundant.
It was great!
Honestly, I spent the week before the workshop (maybe longer!) regretting that I'd applied to come, feeling completely overwhelmed by everything at work and in life. Amazingly, within the first couple hours, my feelings had completely changed--I was feeling inspired, engaged, and productive in ways that I haven't in a while. I was also feeling much more connected to my team members, and to the biology education community as a whole. This was one of the best education workshops I've attended in a while, and I want to heap praise on the organizers who did a fantastic job planning--even more commendable given the short time they had to do so. Kudos!
Very well organized and facilitated. I appreciated the mix of schools and having paired schools from the same geographic area. All in all, a very worthwhile and fun workshop. Thank you.
Extraordinarily well run. I thought the facilitator was great, and having an artist available was also useful and fun,
I was really encouraged by this group (both fellows and participants) and their commitment to improving biology education.
Thanks for the amazing weekend!
I found some of the PULSE fellows snotty and cliquish. Some people obviously knew a lot more than others about science based teaching methods. So for folks who are juggling more than just teaching, the perception that we're not hip was a little irritating.