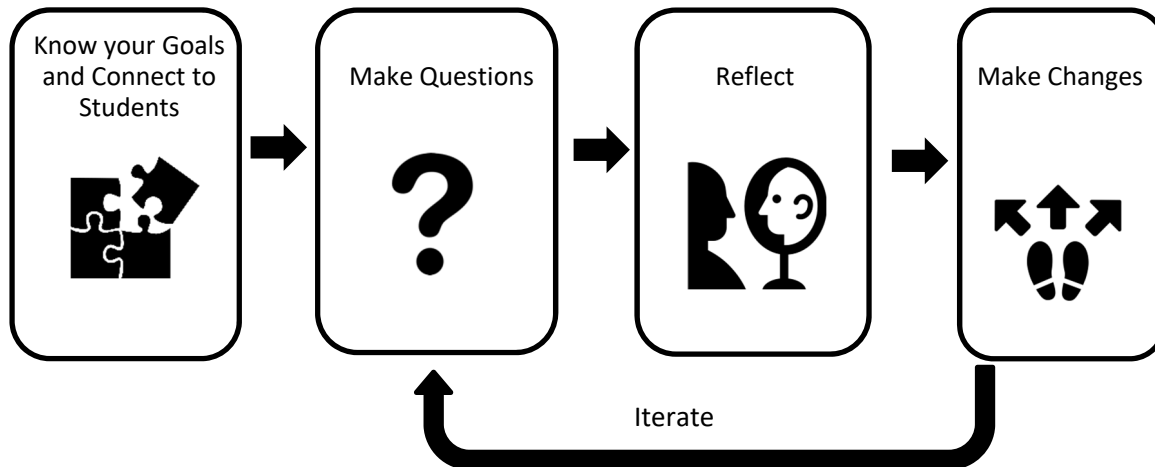**SFU** LEARNING EXPERIENCES
ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

Course Experience Survey:
Question-Making Guide for Instructors

As a course instructor, you can customize the course experience survey for each of your courses by adding up to 4 questions. The feedback you collect with these questions is viewable only to you. This is your space to connect with your students on your teaching inquiry. The following guide presents a question development process to help you get started.

CES Question Development Process

| Know your Goals and Connect to Students | → | Make Questions ? | → | Reflect | → | Make Changes |

Iterate

1) Know your Goals and Connect to Students

What are your teaching goals this term? How will these goals benefit your students' learning experience? Goal statements are a benchmark for what you are striving to achieve. They often begin with, "I want…" To ask a good question, it is important that your goals connect to tangible student learning experiences. For example, students' learning experiences in your course can be made up of:

- Learning activities (reading, group discussion, listening to lectures etc.)
- Learning media (textbooks, websites etc.)
- Assessments (tests, presentations, assignments etc.)
- Course features (pace, time of day, format etc.)
- Their interaction with you (your approachability, openness, clarity of instruction etc.)
- Their academic context (major, course load, and academic goals)

You can have one goal that you ask all 4 of your questions about or you can have many goals that you break down into questions. For example:

- Goal #1: I want my students to feel a sense of community by building connections with each other since my course is their introduction to this program that they will move through as a cohort.
  - o Student experience: I will connect this goal to students by creating four person working-teams for their main assignment and presentation.
- Goal #2: I want my students to debate effectively with one another so that they can build confidence in their informed viewpoint while respecting others and learning from them.

- o Student experience: I will connect this goal to students by assigning individuals within each working group to contrasting political philosophies that they must represent. I will also practice with the class to model this skill and give feedback before they start group work.

2) Translate your Student-Connected Goals into Questions

Your questions should:

- Use language that is clear for your students to understand (i.e. no jargon, vague terms, complicated sentence structures)
- Only ask about one aspect of their experience
- Be answerable by all of your students; considerations may include the students' year levels, international/domestic status, and major.

The example continues below:

- Goal #1: I want my students to feel a sense of community by building connections with each other since my course is their introduction to this program that they will move through as a cohort.
  - o Student experience: I will connect this goal to students by creating four person working-teams for their main assignment and presentation.
    - Question 1: I relied on my working team for more than just the group assignments.
    - Response Scale: Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree
    - Question 2: After taking this course, I feel a sense of community with my cohort.
    - Response Scale: Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree
- Goal #2: I want my students to debate effectively with one another so that they can build confidence in their informed viewpoint while respecting others and learning from them.
  - o Student experience: I will connect this goal to students by assigning individuals within each working group to contrasting political philosophies that they must represent. I will also practice with the class to model this skill and give feedback before they start group work.
    - Question 3: I feel more confident in my ability to discuss different political viewpoints since taking this course.
    - Response Scale: Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree
    - Question 4: Debating with my working team helped me be more open-minded towards viewpoints that are different from my own.
    - Response Scale: Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree

3) Reflect on your results

You will receive a report with your students' responses after grades have been submitted for your courses. Ask yourself questions such as:

- Was the score high (4 or 5), neutral (3) or low (1 or 2)?

- How much variation was there in the responses?

Scenario 1: If your score was high and had low variation, it means that most students in your course had a positive experience. Congratulations! If you plan to deliver the course in the same way next time, consider asking a different question so that you can find an area that you may be able to improve upon.

Scenario 2: If your score was low and had low variation, it means that your students had a consistently negative experience with this aspect. This is an area for improvement that you can investigate further, impact change, and then test again on the next survey.

Scenario 3: When you have high variation in your scores, it means that some students had a positive experience while others did not. This is also an area for improvement that you can investigate further. What made the course go well for some students, but not for others? How can you make the learning experience more consistent across students?

4) Make Changes where Needed

If you had scores from scenario 2, or 3, you've found an area where you can demonstrate improvement. From your responses, identify improvements you could make and then work towards them by making changes to aspects of your course that impact student learning experience:

- Learning activities (reading, group discussion, listening to lectures etc.)
- Learning media (textbooks, websites etc.)
- Assessments (tests, presentations, assignments etc.)
- Course features (pace, time of day, format etc.)
- Their interaction with you (your approachability, openness, clarity of instruction etc.)
- Their academic context (major, course load, and academic goals)

For example, if you received high variation in student responses to the question, "debating with my working team helped me be more open-minded towards viewpoints that are different from my own," consider refining your in-class learning activity (and interaction with you) where you model debating skills by demonstrating how to handle more challenging situations. You could also look at making changes to learning media where you add or change resources to better support this skill.

5) Iterate

Now that you've made some changes, go back to Step 2 and ask the same question in a subsequent class. See if your intervention changed your responses. You may also consider adding an open-ended question in a subsequent class so you can get deeper information about variations in your students' experience. For example, if you received a lot of variation for the question, instead of asking, "I relied on my working team for more than just the group assignments." You could ask, "The goal in assigning group work was to help build a sense of community and support that goes beyond just the assignments. Please comment on how the group work helped or hindered your sense of community."