EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Twenty faculty members attended the teaching methods seminar on the 12th of November 2007. The session’s objective was to initiate teaching methods seminars and to enquire whether such a seminar would be useful for CMU-Q faculty using brainstorming and a survey.

The brainstorming session clearly highlighted a pressing need for faculty on the ground for professional development in the whole array of teaching methods.

Most importantly, the students’ issues section is by far the longest. Students’ abilities to learn and students’ skills are perceived to be quite poor at all levels and there was little questioning...of our teaching delivery. Here is my take on this:

CMU in Qatar is an extraordinary melting pot of cultures; students come from different countries and study in different education systems; part of the faculty are not based in Qatar and may not have received enough exposure to the local “culture”:

We need support and training in teaching across cultures; We need support in teaching students with different abilities levels; We need support in helping the freshmen students improve their fundamental skills.

The question about the most pressing issues in teaching delivery highlights a need to address students’ weaknesses. So I suggest to cover in our next teaching seminar our perceptions of students and how we can work out to better understand and listen to them.

The main conclusion is that we do not have the expertise on the ground to address faculty needs. The Eberly Center may address some of our needs as highlighted by the survey, but will not cover the specific requirements of the region, the culture(s), and the various education systems.
Teaching Seminar methodology

Date: 12 November 2007
Duration: 1 hour
Number of attendees: 20
Organizers: Selma Limam Mansar, Yonina Cooper

The seminar was attended by 20 out of the 39 faculty based in Qatar on the cmu-faculty mailing list. After the seminar, the teaching assistants expressed an interest and asked to be included in the seminar’s mailing list.

The session’s objective was to initiate teaching methods seminars and to enquire whether such a seminar would be useful for CMU-Q faculty.

To do so, the session was divided in two parts:
- Part 1: A Brainstorming session around faculty’s teaching concerns
- Part 2: A Survey on faculty’s expectations from the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence

Brainstorming session: Faculty’s teaching concerns

Attendees were asked to identify issues related to their teaching delivery. The issues were not discussed during the session. The purpose was to gather as many thoughts as possible in half an hour. After the session, the issues were grouped in four main categories: Students’ related issues, Assessment related issues, Course design and ‘other’ issues.

Here are the themes developed during the brainstorming session:

**Assessment:**

- Developing grading strategies and mapping the assessments to the actual learning,
- Providing useful feedback to students,
- Designing assessments that address and support different learning styles,
- Questioning the value of the mid-term evaluation.

**Course design:**

- Providing support in designing course syllabi; having syllabi ready for students on time,
Teaching students how to discuss a business case study, 
Coaching class discussions, 
Teamwork management, 
Course management, 
Improving teaching delivery, 
Introducing a variety of teaching styles and activities in the classroom, 
Adjusting the pace delivery to students: how to manage when a course 
is taken by students with differing abilities? 
Receiving useful feedback from students’ evaluations and from class 
observations.

**Students’ issues:**

Poor time management, 
Lack of responsibility, 
Late submission of assignments, 
Addressing language issues: students have difficulties understanding 
concepts in class due to limited English; students hand-in poor 
answers to assignments to due to a lack of understanding of the 
questions, 
Faculty need to write crystal clear questions in their assignments, 
Addressing students’ immaturity, 
Encouraging students to take notes, 
Improving students’ confidence, 
Develop open-ended thinking, 
Strengthen math abilities, 
Students concentrate on grades and not on learning, 
Address students (lack of) critical thinking skills, 
Address students (lack of) motivation, 
Address students (lack of) responsibility, 
Address students (lack of) problem solving skills, 
Address students (lack of) curiosity for learning.

**‘Other’:**

Better usage of technology for teaching delivery 
(Should we) Limit on-campus events 
Questioning admission standards: faculty members who participated in 
prospective students’ interviews recommended rejecting some 
students who are now in the freshmen pool.

**Most pressing issues:**

Selma Limam Mansar Last updated 19 November 2007
Faculty members were asked at the end of the brainstorming session to identify the most pressing issues they felt we should address in our future teaching seminars. 16 out of the 20 attendees replied. So we had a total of 32 answers identified as “most pressing” by faculty. Detailed faculty answers are available in appendix 2.

Here are the recurring topics:

- Students’ time management (6)
- Developing students’ critical thinking skills (5)
- Developing students’ responsibility (4)
- Developing students’ curiosity (4)
- Developing students’ problem-solving skills (2)
- Developing students’ motivation/confidence (2)
- Improving faculty’s feedback to students (2)
- Developing students’ reading skills (1)
- Becoming a better teacher (1)
- Improving faculty’s presentation skills (1)
- Addressing the admission standards (1)
- Developing students’ communication skills, in English (1)
- Developing students’ Quantitative/math skills (1)
- Using Technology in Teaching (1)
- Varying teaching styles in teaching delivery (1)

Survey: What do you expect from the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence?

The center’s activities were presented to faculty and then we asked them to indicate whether they would be interested in having similar activities at CMU-Q. Possible answers were (Yes, No and May be). The full survey is available in appendix 3.

We have briefly presented what the center currently offers:

- Teaching support for faculty
  - Consultations:
    - Customized diagnosis
    - Course design/redesign
    - Cultivating students writing
    - Discussions with first-year undergraduates teaching
    - TA training
    - Assessing course progress
  - Support for teaching with technology
    - Blackboard,
• Distance learning,
• Multimedia, etc
  – Teaching support for Graduate students
  – Junior faculty seminars
  – Faculty orientation

As for the services offered by the Eberly center, the majority of faculty responded positively to the various activities. Of less interest to faculty are the technology support services. The following graph shows the percentages of interested faculty (answered yes or may be to the survey questions).

![Graph showing Eberly Center Services (% Yes, and may be interested)]

- Faculty luncheon seminars
  - Examples:
    - What Are Experts' Problem-Solving Skills and How Can We Teach Them?"
    - Assessing What You Teach and Teaching What You Assess
    - Integrating Assessment into your Teaching Practice
    - Working Effectively with Small Groups
    - Handling Problematic Student Behavior
    - Planning and Delivering Effective Lectures
Conducting Productive and Engaging Discussions

As for the seminars series offered by the Eberly center, the majority of faculty responded positively to the various seminars. The following graph shows the percentages of interested faculty (answered yes or may be to the survey questions).

![Graph showing teaching seminars percentages]

**Conclusions**

The brainstorming session clearly highlights a pressing need for faculty on the ground for professional development in the whole array of teaching methods. All the usual topics, from course design, course evaluation, design of assessment, and usage of technology were mentioned by faculty.

Most importantly, with the brainstorming session unusually numerous observations were made by faculty about “the students”. Students’ abilities to learn and students’ skills are perceived to be quite poor and there was no questioning at any point ...of our teaching delivery. The students’ issues section is by far the longest and should not be so as the initial question was not about students but about... teaching delivery, our teaching delivery.

Here is my take on this:

Selma Limam Mansar Last updated 19 November 2007
CMU in Qatar is an extraordinary melting pot of cultures; students come from different countries and study in different education systems; part of the faculty are not based in Qatar and may not have received enough exposure to the local “culture”. Many of us come loaded with stereotypes about the local students and the local culture and it is hard to get rid of the preconceived ideas and look beyond the surface to unravel the treasures.

...Could it be that we need guidance and training in teaching across cultures? Could it be that we need guidance in teaching across different abilities levels? Could it be that we need guidance in helping the freshmen students improve their fundamental skills?

The question about the most pressing issues in teaching delivery highlights a need to address students’ weaknesses rather than our needs for professional training: Students’ time management, students’ critical thinking skills, students’ (lack of) responsibility and students’ (lack of) curiosity are the recurring themes.

So I suggest that our next teaching seminar should address our perceptions of students and how we can work out to better understand and listen to our students. We can then pick up ‘time management’ and share best practices.

We do NOT have the expertise on the ground to address faculty needs. The Eberly Center may address some of our needs as highlighted by the survey, but will not cover the specific requirements of the region, the culture(s), and the various education systems.
## APPENDIX 1: LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS TO FACULTY MAILING LIST

(47 members of which 7 are based in Pittsburgh, 1 is the list moderator)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty/Email</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amal Al Malki (aalmalki at andrew.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aziz Lookman (a3v at andrew.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Rojas (alexrojas at cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Reilly (breilly2 at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett Browning (brettb at cs.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Caukkins (caulkins at cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Mills (cmills at cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Gilbert (daveg at andrew.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlene Everhart (dme at andrew.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dudley Reynolds (dreyolds at cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik Helin (ehelin at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Hill (gh0p at andrew.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Khoury (gkhoury at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George White (gmwhite at andrew.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HASAN Demirkoparan (hasand at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle Eula (ieula at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Lacey (ilacey at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iliano Cervesato (iliano at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indira Nair (in0a at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Robertson (jgr at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick McGinnes (jpm3 at cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Kail (kail at cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sham Kekre (kekresh at andrew.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karem Sakallah (ksakalla at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Carter (lc2l at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARION Oliver (mariono at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marjorie Carlson (marjorie at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernardine Dias (mbdias at ri.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Stehlík (mjs at cs.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohamed Mustafa (mmustafa at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohamed Dobashi (mohamedd at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majd Sakr (msakr at andrew.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki Krysak (nkrysak at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Gaus (riw at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Monroe (rm74 at andrew.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOPE Rodefer (rodefer at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russ Walker (rw1k at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadiye Baykara (sbaykara at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Calabrese (sc45 at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selma Limam Mansar (selmal at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilfried Sieg (sieg at cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan K. Walker (skwalker at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silvia Pessoa (spessoa at andrew.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starling Hunter (starling at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thierry Sans (thierry.sans at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuck Thorpe (thorpe at qatar.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yonina Cooper (yonina at cs.cmu.edu)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2: MOST PRESSING ISSUES
(16 RESPONDENTS)

Write down the two most pressing teaching concerns you would like to see addressed in our next Teaching Methods Seminar:

1) High School mindset
   Lack of independent thinking
2) Confidence to think for themselves
   Motivation, organization time management
3) Professors' perception of students of how they need to change by fully understanding and accepting the setting
4) Open-ended exploratory thinking
5) Aspects of self-regulation skills: Time management, Responsibility
6) Setting realistic expectations for students
   Varying class activities
7) Critical thinking & problem solving skills
   Students' lack of time management/ responsibility passion/ intellectual curiosity
8) Time management
   Lack of curiosity
9) How to develop reasoning skills in students
   How to train myself to be a better teacher in class and outside class; what skills do I need to develop
10) Students need to become self-starters in terms of reading, participating in class,
    Solving problems
11) Faculty need to improve their class presentation skills in the ESL setting
    Faculty need to improve their ability to provide feedback and guidance to students
12) Students learning styles
    Time management
13) Admission standards
    Lack of curiosity, confidence in students
14) Time management
    Quality and timely student feedback
15) Intellectual curiosity (I think this course, other topics as well such as responsibility, focus on grades, lack of direction, pace, etc.)
    Ability to communicate well in one language (in lack of ability on the students' behalf, to engage in academic pursuits in English)
16) Quantitative/ Math thinking skills development
    The use of technology in modern teaching

Selma Limam Mansar  Last updated 19 November 2007
## APPENDIX 4: Survey results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey_data.xml</th>
<th>Customised diagnosis</th>
<th>Course design/redesign</th>
<th>Students writing</th>
<th>Freshmen instructors meetings</th>
<th>TA Training</th>
<th>Course assessment (instruments and data)</th>
<th>Blackboard</th>
<th>Distance learning</th>
<th>Multimedia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey_data10.xml</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey_data11.xml</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey_data12.xml</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey_data2.xml</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey_data3.xml</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey_data4.xml</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey_data5.xml</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey_data6.xml</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey_data7.xml</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey_data8.xml</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey_data9.xml</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Problem solving skills
- Yes 38% 50% 67% 54% 54% 50% 38% 8% 54%
- No 23% 17% 8% 23% 38% 25% 38% 77% 31%
- May Be 38% 33% 25% 23% 8% 25% 23% 15% 15%
- Yes or may be 77% 83% 92% 77% 62% 75% 62% 23% 69%

### Designing Assessment
- Yes 46% 77% 58% 58% 50% 77% 38% 67%
- No 15% 15% 8% 8% 0% 31% 8%
- May Be 38% 8% 33% 33% 23% 31% 25%
- Yes or may be 85% 85% 92% 92% 100% 69% 92%

Selma Limam Mansar  Last updated 19 November 2007