What Your Colleagues Said...
(about their work with EOS-SEI)

“The experience of transforming a course and the interaction with STLFs and others in CWSEI has permanently changed my approach to teaching - definitely a long-term effect.”

In anticipation of a transition in the EOS-SEI project model, we interviewed 22 EOS faculty members (your colleagues) who have worked closely with the EOS-SEI Science Teaching and Learning Fellows (STLFs) on evidence-based improvements to their courses. Here is what they said:

What STLF help has been most useful to you that will help you sustain your effort in your future teaching (when STLF help is no longer available)?

- Impartial FEEDBACK to the instructor about what works and what doesn’t (using data from surveys, interviews, observations, and assessments).
- BRAINSTORMING, source of NEW IDEAS, SOUNDING BOARD for ideas (someone to talk to)
- Help with LEARNING GOALS (how to write good ones, how to distinguish them from a list of topics).
- Help with NEW PEDAGOGY (activities, worksheets, clickers, etc. to make learning student-centred)
- Help with COURSE MATERIALS (identify key content, design activity structure, revamp lab structure)
- Help with ASSESSMENTS (align assessments to learning goals, write good multiple choice Qs)
  “Being beat on the head about the fact you can only write [good] assessments based on learning goals”
- Help with COURSE STRUCTURE
- Help with [new-to-you] TECHNOLOGY

What ADVICE would you give a fellow faculty member who is just starting to work with an STLF? (Those listed here were mentioned at least 4 times)

- Pick A FEW THINGS and TRY them, based on YOUR course and YOUR situation. ITERATE.
• Ask for and BE OPEN to NEW IDEAS, constructive FEEDBACK & suggestions.
• It’s WORTH THE TIME investment.
  “Takes time but it’s worth it. You’ll get out what you put in.”
• Be PATIENT.
• Ask for STLFW help with LEARNING GOALS.
• Have FREQUENT, REGULAR meetings, even if SHORT.

Additional good advice from your colleagues:
• Discuss expectations. STLFWs are there to help you do things, not to do them for you.
• Be willing to give up content if your goal is for students to MASTER content.
• It’s all about getting students involved. STLFWs can help you do that in your case.
• Observe other people’s classes. There’s nothing like seeing it in action.
• Make plans ahead of time. Don’t wait. Spend time thinking.
• Communicate with students often, about why you’re doing what you’re doing.
• Collect data and respond to it.
• Keep records.

What will the new EOS-SEI model look like?
EOS-SEI will likely run until December 2012. That’s not very far off! In the time remaining, we want to maximize the impact of this $1.625M project on teaching and learning in EOS. One key to sustainability of this effort beyond the project end-date is CRITICAL MASS.

The new model will aim to provide:
• EVERYONE involved in instruction in EOS the opportunity to benefit from our current amazing resources in teaching and learning.
• Structured consultation, based on (1) what your colleagues say works (above), applied to (2) your situation, with particular “best-match” STLFWs.
• Lower level of commitment for instructors compared to the first round of transformed courses, but still specific, tailored, evidence-based effort & support.
• We’ll come to you (though you can come to us too!)

(Wordcloud from “What STLFW help has been most useful?”)

Contact EOS-SEI: To talk about your course(s) or teaching and learning in general, visit EOS-South 361, or contact Francis Jones (fjones@eos.ubc.ca), Erin Lane (elane@eos.ubc.ca), Josh Caulkins (jaulkins@eos.ubc.ca) or Sara Harris (sharris@eos.ubc.ca). See also http://www.eos.ubc.ca/research/cwsei/.