



# Effective Learning Workshop<sup>1</sup>

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## Worksheet 1: Prepare for Discussion of Effective Learning

**Assumption:** *Effective learning* is the defining outcome of valid education.

**Hypothesis One:** *Effective learning* is dependent on purposes, strategies, and procedures within the responsibility of the administrators and faculty of an educational institution.

**Hypothesis Two:** *Effective learning* is also dependent on the *closeness of fit* between the realized purposes, strategies, and procedures of the institution and the characteristics of the students.

### Questions:

1. In what ways and to what extent do the faculty members, advisors and administrators of TIU-MIAMI make deliberate efforts to assure *closeness of fit* (described in Hypothesis Two)?
2. What has been learned about the relative value of various efforts to increase *effective learning*?
3. What undesirable outcomes have resulted from efforts to assure *closeness of fit*?

**Reflection 1.** *Effective learning* depends upon the ways the learning tasks fit or misfit the learner's history, expectations, preferences, capabilities, motivations.

Thus, to sum up, **effective learning** depends upon how well the learning tasks fit the learner's culture. Reflecting on your own experiences at TIU-MIAMI, can you think of *an incident or interaction with a student, or even with a whole class, which can be traced to some combination of the factors above*?

**Reflection 2.** *Effective learning* is more apt to occur in educational environments having clear expectations, reasonable standards, encouragement toward worthy goals, supportive relationships.

Thus the nature of the educational community itself needs to be developed as a key to the quality of learning experiences. In your opinion, what are the *strengths and weaknesses of TIU-MIAMI in regard to each of these four characteristics*?

**Reflection 3.** *Effective learning* is inhibited by the common culture of formal education. In the attached list of twenty threats to effective learning attributable to formal education, *identify the most significant five or six which you believe need to be remedied at TIU-MIAMI*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ted Ward. Effective Learning Workshop. Trinity International University, South Florida Campus, Miami, FL, August 20-21, 1996

<sup>2</sup> This document exists in the Archives as "Sources of Weakness in the Schooling Approach to Theological Education."

## Worksheet 2: Students as Learners I

For each of the numbered statements, below, consider each of these categories.

- a) Achievement motivation
- b) Attention to studies (carefulness, thoroughness)
- c) Personal responsibility and accountability.
- d) Reading of assigned and recommended materials.
- e) Creative responses to academic tasks.
- f) Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- g) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

List the appropriate letters from the categories above:

1. Our students vary among themselves notably in these ways:
2. Our students differ from students I have worked with in other institutions most clearly in these matters:
3. Our students differ from the students in other institutions that I read about and hear people talking about in these ways:
4. The trends among our students in the past two or three years seems to represent hopeful shifts in these matters:
5. The trends among our students in recent years are not very promising in these matters:

### Worksheet 3: Looking Ahead

A. Every teacher reports moments of discouragement and frustration, but when I think of the negative side of things, here's what I think about:

B. In order to transform TIU-MIAMI to “the college of my best dreams and fondest hopes,” these thing would need to be done:

1.

2.

3.

## Worksheet 4: Accommodating Differences

As a teacher (professor, instructor, advisor) of students in TIU-MIAMI . . .

A. I sometimes feel pressed or tempted to do these sorts of things in order to fulfill student expectations:

1.

2.

3.

B. In regard to reaching our students in order to help them learn, I do not believe that it is necessary to . . .

1.

2.

3.

C. I wish that it were *never* necessary for me to . . .

1.

2.

3.

## Worksheet 5: Students as Learners II

Obviously, these will be only estimates based on subjective judgments, but give them your best guesses!

A. What percentage of the students whom you teach and advise can be described as **concrete** thinkers (uncomfortable with abstract ideas, theory, and concerns about causation)?

\_\_\_\_\_ % [also please briefly describe an example]

B. What percentage of the students whom you teach and advise can be described as **narrow** (disinterested in things outside the student's previous experiences and major preoccupations)?

\_\_\_\_\_ % [also please briefly describe an example]

C. What percentage . . . are **brighter** than typical collegians today (in intellectual, informational, and skill matters)?

\_\_\_\_\_ % [also please briefly describe an example]

D. What percentage . . . are excessively **dependent**, depending on you and others for explanations, examples, reviews, reminders, and help?

\_\_\_\_\_ % [also please briefly describe an example]

E. What percentage . . . are **abstract** reasoners—comfortable thinking, talking, and writing about ideas and the possibilities that experiences suggest?

\_\_\_\_\_ % [also please briefly describe an example]

Which of the descriptors above demand the most time and effort on your part?

A\_\_\_\_\_ B\_\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_\_ E\_\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet 6: Personal Reflections

*[Confidential page. Not to be collected. Discuss only if you feel comfortable doing so.]*

In responding to the following three questions, consider these four aspects of your own life:

**Personally** (In matters of personality and social involvement),

**Professionally** (Your motives, competencies, and professional status),

**Academically** (Your career and academic future, including your stature in the world of academic affairs), and

**Spiritually** (Your perspectives, orientation, and integration—wholeness as a Christian).

1. *What is happening to you because you teach in TIU-MLAMI?*

2. *What are the most important things you have learned?*

3. *To what extent and in what ways do you value your relationships with your students?*

## Worksheet 7: TIU-MIAMI as Unusual

A. Is it true that effective teaching at TIU-MIAMI requires some specific accommodations to students' learning styles on the part of the instructor?

[Choose and mark one response. Add a short comment.]

\_\_\_ **Yes, substantially**, and I can *give several examples of how I must accommodate myself to the situation . . .*

\_\_\_ **Yes, but not as much as I had expected**. I think that what I find in the real situation can be misunderstood and even exaggerated. I can *illustrate what I mean in the following ways . . .*

\_\_\_ **Not very often**. It is difficult even to think of many ways in which this is occasionally true. Perhaps *the reason that I see it this way is . . .*

\_\_\_ **No, not at all**. In fact, I can describe many situations which reflect how much TIU-MIAMI is like other teaching situations that I have known. *I can illustrate this . . .*

B. What comes to mind when you hear someone say that TIU-MIAMI is different, or when it is suggested that to be effective here you must do things differently as a teacher or advisor?

I usually assume that the comment refers to one or more of the following matters:

[Please mark "1" for the most probable, "2" for the second, and so forth until you have represented all that goes on in your mind.]

Such a remark likely refers to . . .

- a. \_\_\_ our unusual student body.
- b. \_\_\_ our unusual type of institution.
- c. \_\_\_ our unusual educational motives.
- d. \_\_\_ our unusual faculty.
- e. \_\_\_ our unusual urban context.
- f. \_\_\_ our unusual ethnic composition.
- g. \_\_\_ our level of spiritual commitment.