

# Preparing New Professors for a Research University's Teaching Mission

## The LSA Teaching Academy at the University of Michigan

Deborah Meizlish, Assistant Director (debmeiz@umich.edu); Matthew Kaplan, Managing Director (mlkaplan@umich.edu)

### Program

#### GOALS

Improve Teaching and Learning in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) by helping faculty:

- Understand that LSA and U-M leadership *value good teaching*
- Deepen their *understanding of how students learn*
- *Gather strategies* they can use in various teaching contexts
- Prepare for first teaching experience at U-M:
  - *Learn about* diversity of U-M undergraduate *students*
  - *Learn about resources and policies*
  - *Calibrate courses* and teaching to U-M context
- *Develop* an interdisciplinary *cohort* around teaching

#### STRUCTURE

- Embedded in offer letters
- Mandatory and compensated
- Pre-term orientation
  - Practice teaching
  - Interaction with senior faculty
  - Dinner with chairs and administrators
- Follow-up events
- Midterm student feedback

#### PLANNING PROCESS

- Analyze programs for new faculty at U-M and other universities
- Conduct focus groups with U-M faculty in their second year and one year post tenure
- Get feedback on initial design from U-M award-winning faculty
- Plan final agenda in close consultation with Dean's office

#### Faculty Focus Group Results:

- Common challenges
  - Teaching large courses
  - Teaching graduate courses/students
  - Understanding undergraduate student needs
- Issues raised by senior faculty
  - Mixed messages about the importance of teaching
  - Sense of isolation

#### CONTENT

- Who are University of Michigan Students?
- Engaging U-M Students
- How Students Learn/Supporting Student Learning
- Course Planning
- Practice Teaching
- Practical Responses to Student Issues
- Technology for Teaching
- Teaching and Managing Large Classes
- Mentoring and Graduate Teaching: Labs, Seminars and the Dissertation
- Teaching and the Tenure Process

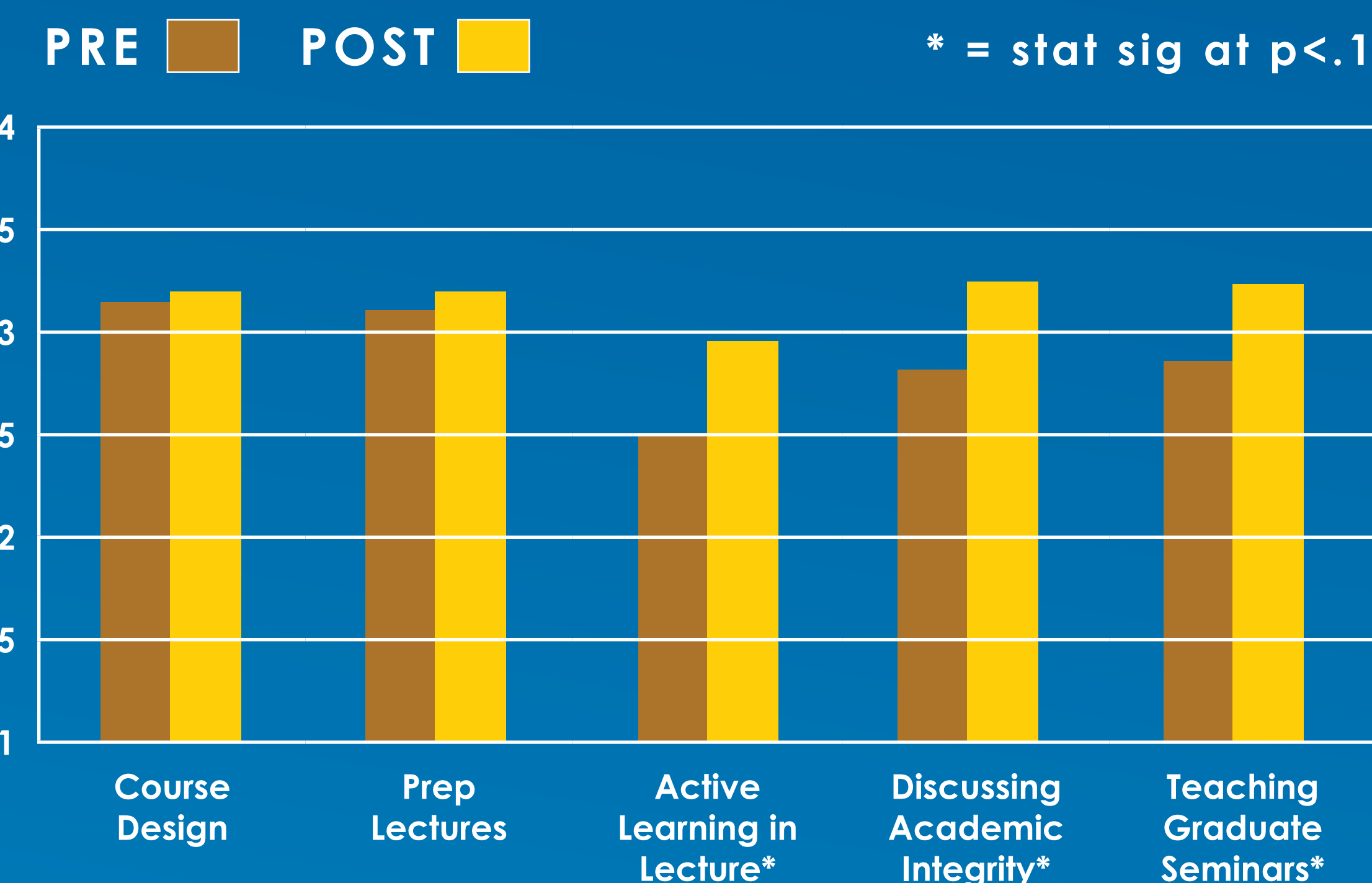
### Impact

#### PARTICIPANTS

	TOTAL	Human.	Soc. Sci.	Nat. Sci.
2010	28	3	13	12
2009	40	14	16	10

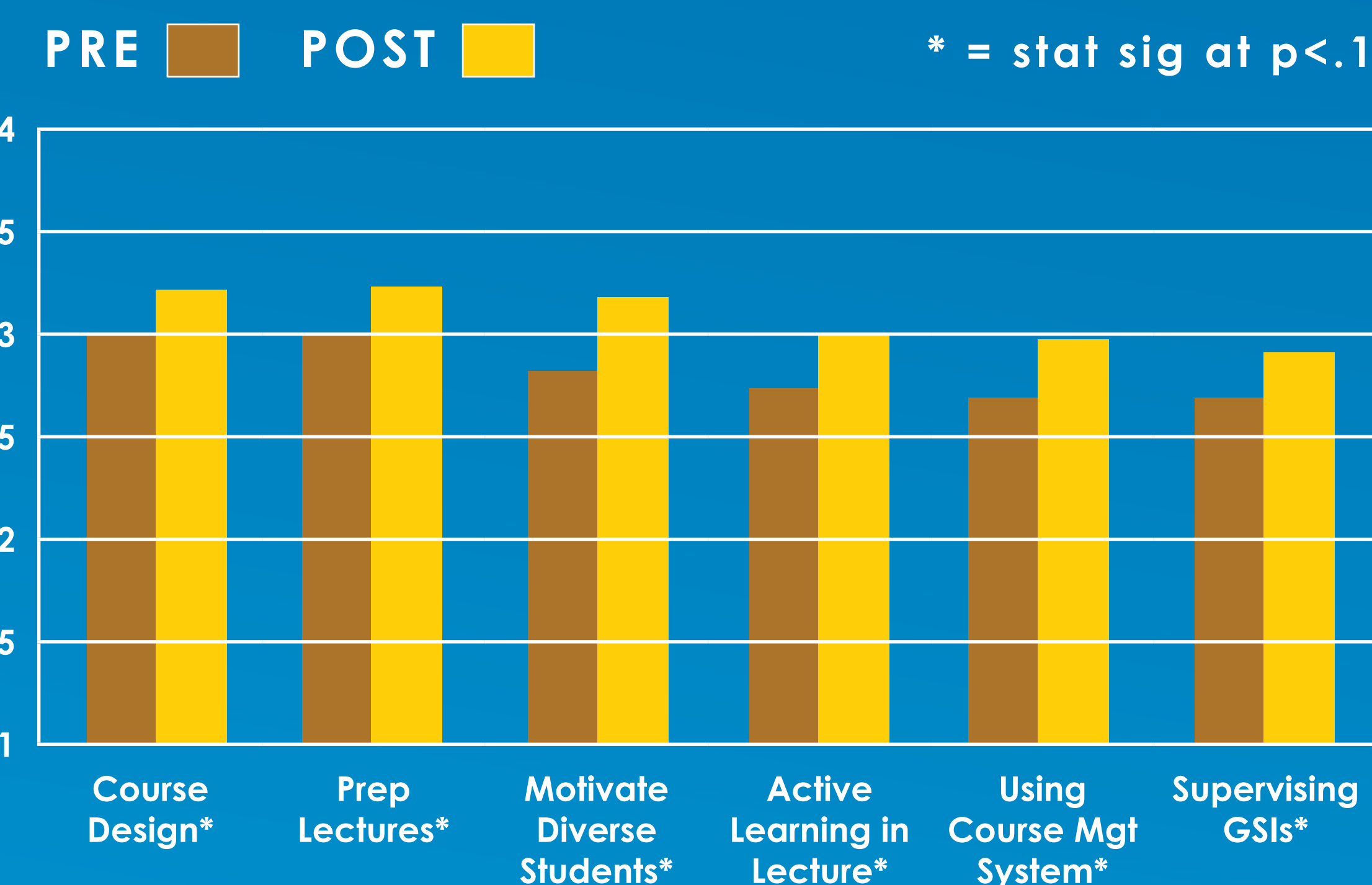
#### CONFIDENCE (2010)

(1 = Very Unprepared....4 = Very Prepared)



#### CONFIDENCE (2009)

(1 = VERY UNPREPARED....4 = VERY PREPARED)



#### OVERALL VALUE (1-5)

Pre-Term Orientation

2010 (N=27/28): **4.33**  
2009 (N=30/40): **4.00**

#### QUOTES

**Value Good Teaching:** "It was heartening to see how dedicated the university is to teaching."

**Understand How Students Learn:** "I learned more about the latest educational research than in all my years of graduate school."

**Gather Strategies:** "I will definitely try some of the concrete suggestions I got regarding active learning." "I actually made some major changes to my syllabus for my grad seminar."

**Learn About U-M Students:** "The session topics nicely introduc[ed] us to the expectations of Michigan students and the teaching culture at Michigan."

**Learn About Resources/Policies:** "I have a new (and better) perspective on how to deal with various student issues."

**Calibrate Courses:** "I am going to reduce the number of readings, make a course pack available (instead of putting additional articles online), and [be] careful to lay out my policies in the syllabus."

**Develop a Cohort:** "The workshop was very valuable for the camaraderie and introductions alone."