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ACUE Course in Effective Teaching Practices Experience

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My name is Brenda Ortiz, one of the faculty members that participated in the ACUE course in Spring 2019. I cannot emphasize enough how impactful and effective participating in this program has been for me, both during and after taking the courses. This program addressed topics such as:

- Designing an Effective Course and Class

- Establishing a Productive Classroom Environment

- Using Active Learning Techniques

- Promoting Higher Order Thinking

- Assessing to Inform Instruction and Promote Learning

All 25 modules were enriched with content that addressed my current, past and present concerns, questions and ideas I've had in my time in the classroom. For this submission, I have decided to included several of my module reflections from my experiences during my time in ACUE.

2D Reflection: Motivating Your Students

Over the last few weeks since the quarter began, I applied several of the techniques discussed within this module. For my first day of class, I decided to implement a power point presentation containing content pertaining to my teaching position and other tidbits regarding my other areas of interest as a means of formally introducing myself. As the class progressed, we reviewed the guidelines for their introductory speech (as this is a public speaking course). In the guidelines, I incorporated that students must address what goals they wish to achieve for my course, as well as any goals they may have for their personal and professional lives. After reviewing all other speech guidelines, I addressed with the students the classroom expectations and the ways in which they can meet them. Lastly, I recently sent motivational messages through the verbal feedback I provided from the recent speech assignment that was just completed.

By incorporating the power point, I felt that I was able to use the opportunity to motivate my students with my enthusiasm for not only the subject but for my job as an instructor. By having my students address their goals in various areas and in their speeches, my goal was to have them acknowledge that if they apply themselves through these goals, they can attain them not only for my

class but in other areas in their lives as well. I want my students leaving my class with the aspirations to excel in all they do. My concerns when comes to discussing expectations with students is often times I'll come across those who tend to be quite harsh on themselves; therefore, imposing unreasonable standards on themselves. So this time around I addressed the expectations of my public speaking course by establishing that no one in the course should be expecting perfection, and that public speaking is a skill that can be best acquired through time and practice so that they don't lose motivation on the first set of feedback they receive. The reason why I mention providing motivational messages in the form of verbal feedback is because I used to only provide written feedback, and after a while I felt that that left a negative impression with the students in that they were not getting something more genuine and personal. So this time around, I allowed my students to provided their own feedback of their own speeches and I would follow up with mine by providing constructive comments on areas of improvement but positive reinforcement for their efforts and areas of strengths.

This was new as I was always used to just speaking about a few things about myself, but the power point enhanced this technique by providing visuals. I would say this technique was successful as the quotes and images I provided received a reaction from the class. Students would laugh, smile, or share similar experiences

that I would share. Challenges I faced with having the students address their goals in their speech was that it was sometimes difficult to hear them all or some students did not address all goals that were required. On the positive side, I sensed some excitement and encouragement among the students and their other peers while discussing their goals and plans. The success in sharing reasonable classroom expectations, I think, is that it demonstrates clearly to students that although they may be facing potential difficulty, they can still excel in the course as long as they apply themselves. I would say that providing the motivational/positive feedback was a success, as I did observe positive reactions to the feedback I provided.

By disclosing details about myself, particularly with the use of my power point, I noticed that students engaged more with me than in previous courses. Many asked questions or shared about how they too had similar interests as myself based upon the images I supplemented. Others would ask about my teaching experiences after I'd share some of my own stories of struggles with public speaking and how I now teach the course. Students have since expressed that they were motivated and inspired by my experiences and are now determined to do well in the course. When it came to sharing their goals, my students engaged with one another more. Once speeches concluded, students would ask each other questions or make positive remarks on what they liked about the speech. This in

turn allowed them to get well acquainted and more comfortable around one another so as to get through the speech process effectively. In regards to classroom expectations, students are demonstrating their understanding by sharing with me in the feedback portion of their speeches what they believe is an area for improvement for them. And would then go on to support what they plan to do in order to improve by the next. Rather than be discouraged, As I've seen in the past, these students are taking my course expectations and are applying themselves to meet them, especially with the pressure off of not having to be perfect. Lastly, in regard to providing motivational messages in my feedback, Students have verbally expressed appreciation and an understanding that whatever feedback I provided is not intended to discourage but to be constructive and to assist them in their growth throughout my course.

For future classes, I would like to consider making a video implementing current media apps, like Snapchat or Instagram for the purpose of keeping the media use up to date. In regards to having students create goals, I find that what may be better for implementation is by having students take time to sit, ponder and write out what is it they really want to achieve rather than to discuss so quickly in a short speech. I may even consider having this turned into a paper assignment instead. When it comes to motivational messages, I would like to aim for sending

out more positive messages via email or announcements as a means of

encouragement prior to class starting or speeches.

1E Reflection: Planning an Effective Class Session

The technique I selected this week was the engagement trigger. For my chapter on selecting a topic as a part of the speech making process, I used a quote to start off the lesson.

My goal for the class that day was to review this chapter without making it so dismal. Although there may be an impression that it is very simple selecting topics, most students do not realize how unexpectedly difficult it can often be; from having difficulty selecting one of the many topics they have in mind to having difficulty generating ideas.

The quote I incorporated was by Christian Louboutin, and it goes as follows: "If you do what you love, it is the best way to relax." This quote was a success as we had previous discussed and agreed that one feels most comfortable to conduct speeches when they are familiar with the topic and familiar with the audience. And if the speaker can enjoy the presence of the audience and confidence in their topic, they have the potential to excel.

Students referred to the quote and shared personal experiences of doing work when they lacked the enthusiasm and passion to complete them. This in turn allowed peers to engage with their experiences and how they related to one

another. And to contribute to this engagement, I shared a story of my own and was able to have some students relate to my experience.

I have previous experience with using quotes to start off lectures. I had tried it for one quarter and for the most part it worked at the time. The reason I did not continue was because I was trying different techniques each quarter. For the future, I would like to reconsider bringing this back as well as possibly implementing video clips for the start of class.

3D Reflection: Planning Effective Class Discussions

The technique I implemented this week was the preparatory quiz. I set student expectations by explaining to the class that this quiz was to be submitted as a form of attendance, as well as, a starting point for our class discussion.

I used this technique in my Intercultural communication class (which is a dual enrollment course for high school students). Based on prior observations, my students would appear restless and distracted when class time was all dedicated to writing notes. So for this chapter that regarded Intercultural communication and self-concept, I figured this technique would be effective in some lively discussion about personal experiences.

The success I found with this technique was that I managed to get students to not only stay for the entire course (as I've had some issues with some students leaving early lately) but managed to get them to engage more as they were aware that this quiz earned them points towards their grade.

Students were actively engaged in sharing personal experiences pertaining to self-disclosure and how outside influences have taken affect on who they are as individuals and their communicative styles.

I actually enjoyed and was excited about the turn out of this assignment as my

students got to share stories that demonstrated to me their comprehension and

application of course concepts.

3E Reflection: Facilitating Engaging Class Discussions

The techniques I applied this week were managing the dominant speaker and encouraging the quieter students to speak up by using the quiz I applied from the previous module.

My concern with my Interpersonal class, as of late, has been managing the dominant speakers in the class, versus the quieter students. In order to even out the opportunities to discuss, I had student take a quiz on the chapter's content pertaining to their interpersonal styles of communicating and the influences on the self. A discussion was held afterwards, but I made sure that every student had an opportunity to share a personal experience so no one would feel excluded. I even incorporated my own story.

A challenge I did face was having a dominant speaker constantly trying to interrupt. However, I did bring it to her attention that as much as her input was appreciated, the comments being made needed to remain on task and contributing to the discussion effectively. The success was that both types of students managed to engage. Although the quieter ones can be more engaged, I'm willing to work more on this area so that that improves.

Students did engage with one another and even managed to relate with the quieter students. This in turn appeared to be comforting for the quieter students. But of course, I still have room for improvement.

A technique I'd like to try in the future is the Hatful of Quotes approach. I find it really neat that students can all have a chance to give their perceptions of the quote from the text.

5D Reflection: Checking for Student Understanding

The technique I applied in class this week was the Muddiest Point. However, I applied this as a homework assignment as I am currently attempting to switch up lecture methods for my Interpersonal Communication course with the high school students.

As mentioned in my previous modules, this is my first time teaching this course and high school students. As of recently, my class has made it known that they would much prefer to be doing activities and a little less writing of notes from power points.

A success of this technique was that students came in prepared. A challenge that was faced was having several students, who were previously absent, not be prepared. Some of these students do not have access to a computer, and a bit surprisingly, smart phones. Therefore, posting any announcements or emails for their awareness may have still posed this challenge.

Students were actively engaging with their peers regarding the questions they brought in and they all collaborated in finding answers from the chapter. I, of course, was monitoring how each group was handling the questions by reading both generated questions and responses. So essentially they all built their chapter notes together. And when reviewing the purpose of the chapter, students did bring

up examples to ensure they understood, and to my surprise and amazement, they did.

I actually liked the result of this technique and hope to continue using it as is. My only concern I am working to address is the issue of students being absent and not being present for instruction. Also, if I can implement another technique it would be for students to write out important concepts from the class session within a minute. That one sounds just as effective.

2C: Connecting With Your Students

Within the last quarter, I've applied questions from the survey technique from this module into the introductory speeches.

This technique has assisted in my professional goals by gaining an understanding for each of my student's goals and needs for this course. As well as goals and needs for anything outside of the course.
The success of this technique was that students got to address areas from the survey in their speeches. This in turn provided the class an opportunity to see how they each relate with one another.

Evidence that indicated the effectiveness of this implementation was the engagement among the students with one another. If one student's shared a goal, hobby , experience or major that aligned with another peer, they would speak up after the speech or refer to their peer in their speech.

In the future, I like the idea of having a survey separate from the speech, so that I may have their responses better documented.

2F Reflection: Helping Students Persist in Their Studies

The technique I applied was to offer students a choice for their projects in my interpersonal communication class.

Teaching Interpersonal and high school students for the first time, I wanted to be sure that they were motivated to finish off the course strongly with a project. This project required that students choose two people of two different cultures to interview. Interview questions were to be based upon several communication concepts we've reviewed. Students were also given the choice to pick from all concepts and select a few. After the interview, they were to write a paper with the results.

The success of this is that in their presentations discussing what they got out of the experience, it is clear to me which students were able to comprehend the content and those who still seem to be struggling.

I was very happy to see when students would refer to an example I gave in class or how they acknowledged a concept and they were able to elaborate correctly on that concept.

How I plan to adjust this technique is to next time provide different options for projects instead of just one. I think this will give them the creative freedom to choose a project style that fits them most.

1C Reflection: Aligning Activities and Assignments With Course Outcomes

One of the techniques I found helpful within this module was making assignment expectations more transparent through the seminar sheet. I selected this technique as it assisted me in better understanding the importance of implementing course assignments that are aligned with course outcomes.

The work completed in this module served as a guide to creating and facilitating assignments clear of instruction and valuable to course expectations so as to maintain student motivation.

For future reference, I would like to incorporate the course design to do list to ensure that the assignments and assessments I'm implementing are constructive and appropriate for my course.

Overall, ACUE left a lasting impression on myself, as an instructor, and on all the students and classes I've taught since. I am very grateful for the enriching experience and hope to continue to applying and improving through the use of the program's teachings.