Exemplary Teaching: Inspiring Learner Engagement and Success

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The Faculty of Business Administration, University of Regina funded Lisa Watson to attend this conference as a representative of the faculty's Teaching Committee. Registration was courtesy of McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

List of presentations attended:

1. What the Best Teachers Do
   Keynote speaker #1: Ken Bain, Montclair University
2. Follow-up Discussion on "What the Best Teachers Do"
   Concurrent session #1: Ken Bain, Montclair University
3. Teaching for Better Learning at a Research University
   Keynote speaker #2: Christopher Knapper, Queen's University
4. University-Community Partnering for Service Learning
   Concurrent session #2: Anne Bigelow and Marla Gaudet, St. Francis Xavier University
5. Personal Versus Impersonal Assessment
   Concurrent session #3: Richard Kerr, Durham College
6. Treating Students as Adults: Facilitating Rather Than Lecturing
   Keynote speaker #3: Todd Nickle, Mount Royal College
7. Motivating Teaching! Inner Qualities that Engage Learners
   Concurrent session #4: Jack Jones, Nipissing University, Edwin Ralph, University of Saskatchewan
8. Electronic Voting Systems: Pedagogical Principles for Learner Engagement
   Concurrent session #5: Kalyani Premkumar & Cyril Coupal, University of Saskatchewan
9. Personal Accountability in the Classroom
   Concurrent session #6: Glynnis Leib, University of Manitoba

Notes taken during each of the presentations follow, including lists of any relevant handouts that were distributed. Should you be interested in viewing or receiving copies of any of the handouts, please contact Lisa Watson directly.

Exemplary Teaching: Inspiring Learner Engagement and Success
University of Saskatchewan, November 2-3, 2006

What the Best Teachers Do
Ken Bain, Montclair University
(Author of "What the best college teachers do")
Keynote Speaker #1

The foundational quality of all good teachers is that they know how to ask really good questions.

There are three elements to good teaching:
1. subject matter
2. teaching techniques
3. understanding of human learning

Our biggest problem as teachers:

We want our students to develop new mental models of reality. Learners will traditionally just wrap new information around existing preconceptions on a subject, thus, no real change in thinking occurs. Questioning our own current paradigms rather than using them is a very unnatural act. Thus, teaching is very difficult to do.

Question to ask yourself:
Does my course change the way people think about "X"?
(Pre- and post –tests can demonstrate that for most it does not.)

To Stimulate the Unnatural Act of Construction:
1. Put students into a situation where their current paradigm <u>does not work</u> by providing an intellectual challenge.
2. The student has to care enough to engage in the subject. Asking big questions engages students in answering big questions.

Intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation:
- The educational system uses an extrinsic motivational system (grades).
- In all of us is a person who is fascinated with the world. We have to engage students' intrinsic interest as their motivation.

5 elements in a successful teacher's practice:
1. a question/problem/issue
2. an attempt to get students to buy into the question
3. engage students in pursuing the question
4. help students to reach a (tentative) solution
5. leave the student with another question

Unsuccessful teachers have only one element, specifically, giving students answers to questions.

Follow-Up Discussion on "What the Best Teachers Do"
Ken Bain, Montclair University
(Author of "What the best college teachers do")
Concurrent Session #1

Poor teachers: teaching is transmission or explanation
Good teachers: anything I do to help my students learn is teaching

A Way to Approach Human Learning:

- What do you want your students to be able to do? (can be on various levels)
- How can we create an environment to help them achieve that?
- How can we and our students come to understand the meaning & nature of their learning?

Encouraging student motivation in class:

- Develop a reputation for stimulation and interest
- Encourage individuals who are not being engaged.

Stereotypes or group biases (e.g. strong student, poor student) will affect one's behaviour in terms of either living up to or rejecting the stereotype.
(Asian women in mathematics example – control group does as normal, cued gender reduces scores, cued ethnicity raises scores.)

It is important to take teaching from behind closed doors. Allow colleagues to share successes and failures.

How do we foster enriched learning environments for ourselves as faculty colleagues? Break down artificial structures such as departments and the dichotomy between teaching and research.

Assessment measures performance rather than learning.

- Some professors (including Ken) have turned to self-assessment, where students have to develop an argument and reasons to support their assessment. Uses other assessment materials in combination with these self-evaluations.

Teaching for Better Learning at a Research University
Christopher Knapper, Queen's University
Keynote Speaker #2

There is absolutely no correlation between good teaching and research skills. They are independent skills.

Deep learning – meaning based, intrinsic motivation, incorporates new ideas with existing knowledge and own experience.

Surface (shallow) learning – reproduction based, extrinsic motivation, rote learning from syllabus.

Factors to Promote Deep Learning:

1. Good Teaching: staff prepped and confident
2. Open to Students: friendly, flexible, helpful
3. Freedom in Learning: choice of what students study (within and/or among courses)
4. Clear Goals and Standards: assessment standards & expectations clearly defined
5. Vocational Relevance: courses relevant to future careers
6. Social Climate: good relationships between staff and students (social and academic)

Factors to Discourage Deep Learning

1. Workload: heavy content coverage & many assessment tasks
2. Formal Teaching: perception that formal classes (versus individual study) are main sources of learning

In teacher/content centered teaching focuses on transmission of structured knowledge.

- Highly praised/rewarded on teaching evaluations because it is simple and predictable.

In student/learning centered teaching a shift is facilitated by student/teacher interactions.

- Stress student activity and task performance
- Meaningful and personal interaction with students
- Offer opportunities for team learning
- More authentic methods of assessment stressing task performance in natural situations; preferably including peer and self assessment
- Make learning *processes* more explicit
- Tasks that encourage integration of information and skills
- Curriculum planning focuses on realistic student learning outcomes

University-Community Partnering for Service Learning
Anne Bigelow and Marla Gaudet, St. Francis Xavier University
Concurrent Session #2

Discussed the Service Learning Center at St. FX and how it works. Not unlike a co-op office, centrally run through out university, it encourages all professors and students to engage in service learning projects.

Service Learning Definition
Service learning involves working for community-based clients to complete some academic project. Community-based clients include grassroots and not-for-profit organizations that provide services to the community.

Working for industry is *not* classified a service learning, but simply experiential learning.

Types of service learning projects available:

1. Direct service to the community with a relevant research project attached, such as working for a soup kitchen to study systemic difficulties faced by the homeless.
2. Skill specific projects such as a business plan for a local company.
3. Creation of new community services, such as after school physical activity programs run by kinesiology students linked to a project on childhood obesity.

Faculty Role:

- Set learning objectives
- Help choose service-learning experiences
- Design assignments to demonstrate learning
- Guide student learning
- Assess student learning

Student Role:

- Responsible to faculty and client

Community Partner Role:

- Provides needs
- Provides orientation
- Provide supervision on site (or guidance if no specific site)
- Help with reflection

Office Staff Role:

- Connect faculty with partners
- Organize placements
- Follow up on relationships

Benefits:

- Deeper learning opportunities for students
- Strengthens links between university and community
- Community organizations get exposure to potential employees

Difficulties:

- Buy-in from faculty and administration (students and community are not a problem)
- Matching needs of partners to course requirements and timelines and skill levels of the students
- Cost to community partners is high in terms of time and effort

For more information visit:
www.communityservicelearning.ca

Personal Versus Impersonal Assessment
Richard Kerr, Durham College
Concurrent Session #3

Looked at ways to improve student feedback through impartiality and clarity in assessment methods.

Examples of how to make rubrics less subjective are provided.

Examples of tools that can help students to succeed in fulfilling rubric requirements are provided.

The benefit of impersonal assessment is that it allows for more personal relationships with students, which in turn leads to enhanced interaction in the classroom.

Handouts:
(Rick considers these materials to be "shareware" and can be adapted for your own use.)

- Examples of criteria-based evaluation forms
- Rick's Writing Tips: How to avoid over eighty-percent of the most common spelling and grammar errors (this document will be published by McGraw-Hill Ryerson in the near future)

Treating Students as Adults: Facilitating Rather Than Lecturing
Todd Nickle, Mount Royal College
Keynote Speaker #3

Uses blended delivery to maximize hands-on learning during classroom time.

On-line Lectures:

Creates flash files of lectures (using software called Breeze) and puts them on-line for students to work through at their own pace and convenience outside of class time. Files are placed on blackboard (WebCT) at least a week in advance of the class and are left there for the remainder of the term.

Uses flash so that the slides can't just be printed. Encourages students to "make notes" (relevant for them to use). This is in contrast to writing nothing for themselves or "taking notes" (write down everything he says).

Video and audio built into PowerPoint (using a webcam) allow students to feel more connected to the professor. Video also allows for the use of metaphor and small demos (e.g. clicking Lego pieces together to simulate DNA protein connections).

Self-test questions allow students to monitor whether they are on track.

Extra practice materials, video content and web links are added to the lectures so that students can explore concepts in as much depth as they want at their convenience.

In Class:

Clicker questions motivate attendance and preparation prior to class. Some of the self-test questions from the on-line lecture are included in the classroom questions for familiarity and reward for preparation.

PowerPoint slides generally mimic those on-line, but with more or different question slides, and workspace pages where he can "write on the blackboard" with an electronic tablet.

This electronic tablet is wireless, so he can write on it from anywhere in the room. This allows him to get down into the trenches wit the students and be a "guide on the side."

In-class clicker questions, demonstrations, interactive exercises, and discussions make up the bulk of classroom time. These activities help to identify issues students are having trouble with and helps Todd to tailor activities to help them better understand the material.

He also uses the webcam for close-ups during in-class demos. In general, he makes class time about hand-on learning; something there is little time for in traditional classes where information transmission has to be done face to face.

Todd does a blended class and a traditional class. Blended delivery meets less often so it is not too time intensive outside of class, but students use their in-class time for more active learning activities. Traditional delivery does not get the video lectures, but they also don't have time for nearly as many hands-on exercises.

In the traditional class he gets a normal bell curve around 60-65% with quite a few failures. (Much of the failure is due to the difficult transition between high school and university learning expectations).

In the blended class he gets more of a bimodal distribution, with an average in the Bs, virtually no Cs, and a relatively similar or slightly higher number of failures as before. Students either excel or are still unable to adapt to university expectations.

ANDRAGOGY:

Difference between high school and university:

- Preparation required
- Independence
- Big fish in a small pond

Students/freshmen often don't know where to look for answers. Help them learn where to look rather than telling them the answers.

Technology is a tool than can enhance/evolve teaching. You can't transfer knowledge. You can help people to learn how to apply knowledge.

Keys to successful andragogical teaching:

- Make students understand that they are masters of their own destinies
- Make material doable
- Make studying worthwhile
- Make consequences obvious (focus on logical consequences rather than natural consequences)

Key Points:

- Students are masters of their own destinies.
- Passionate educators will not lower the bar (training dolphins analogy – dolphins will jump over a high bar for a reward. If they miss and you lower the bar until it touches the water the dolphin will never jump again because you have shown that it doesn't have to.)
- There is plenty for us to bring to the classroom, especially if we can push the content-driven stuff outside.

Motivating Teaching! Inner Qualities that Engage Learners

Jack Jones, Nipissing University, Edwin Ralph, University of Saskatchewan

Concurrent Session #4

Jack Jones:

EL = IQ (ET1 + ET2 + T + PILE)

Engaged Learners = Inner Qualities (effective teaching + effective technology + time + positive interactive learning environment)

Handouts of what the most important inner qualities of effective teachers that promote engaged learners are discussed and provided in some handouts.

Edwin Ralph:

Areas of teaching:

1. content
2. general teaching skills
3. pedagogical content knowledge (knowing what students have trouble with in your area and how to help them)

ICE:

1. ideas (course content),
2. connections (how they go together),
3. extensions (uses, applications)

Provided participants with a self-assessment of teaching so that we might consider where we are strong and where we can improve in terms of our teaching practices that might help to engage our students.

Handouts:

- Checklists for Effective Teaching Practices that Promote Engaged Learners
- Motivating Teaching! (How is Yours?)
- Model your qualities, Practice acknowledgement, Meet learner needs

Electronic Voting Systems: Pedagogical Principles for Learner Engagement
Kalyani Premkumar & Cyril Coupal, University of Saskatchewan
Concurrent Session #5

This presentation explores how to use clickers effectively for a wide range of classroom activities.

Handouts:

- PowerPoint presentation slides
- Exercise for electronic voting system question development

Personal Accountability in the Classroom

Glynnis Leib, University of Manitoba

Concurrent Session #6

Unfortunately, this roundtable did not come close to meeting its objectives. However, those interested in the topic of personal accountability in the classroom may want to view the suggested readings handout.

Personal accountability was thought to encompass such issues as taking ownership of your own situation, making your own decisions, recognizing the consequences of those decisions, being responsible for those consequences, and following through on decisions and/or promises. This could be from the respective of both the instructor and the student.

Handouts:

- Objectives for the roundtable
- Considerations about the current education system and the learning process from *Freedom to Learn* by Carl Rogers (1969)
- Suggested readings list