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2019

ACUE Course in Effective Teaching Practices: The Impact on Student Learning

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Recommended Citation

Wojnar, Danuta, "ACUE Course in Effective Teaching Practices: The Impact on Student Learning" (2019).
Q2S Enhancing Pedagogy. 63.
<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/q2sep/63>

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ACUE COURSE IN EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

ACUE Course in Effective Teaching Practices: The Impact on Student Learning

Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) Course in Effective Teaching Practices, consisting of a total of 25 modules, provides an opportunity to learn how to design courses, engage learners, and establish a productive learning environment in both online and face-to-face teaching format.

In order to learn how to improve course design, the course participant has an opportunity to complete 6 modules that help to prepare an effective syllabus; establish powerful learning outcomes; align course outcomes with assessments, activities, and assignments; and develop fair, consistent, and transparent grading practices. Providing specific and developmental objectives allows students to focus on the important information and helps them to develop critical thinking. Creating proper objectives also guides lecturers' teaching. Securing an easy access to learning outcomes within syllabus and Blackboard and reviewing/ discussing the objectives in the beginning of each lecture is crucial to student learning as well. Making sure that lecturer determines the cognitive level of each objective and match it with appropriate type of assessment assures that students' learning is assessed appropriately. Aligning learning outcomes with teaching methods provides clarity for students and teaching structure for faculty. Incorporating a graphic calendar design within syllabus assists students in meeting assignment deadlines and is especially useful for visual learners. Using standardized grading rubrics for papers, oral presentations, or online discussion participation, across all courses of the program, facilitates grading consistency and transparency.

Other 7 modules of ACUE course address student learning environment. They examine ways to connect with students; ways to promote a civil learning environment; methods to engage underprepared students and to develop self-directed learners; approaches to embrace diversity in the classroom; and techniques to provide clear directions and explanations. The one

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method to engage students and encourage active class participation is using the seating chart. Students are called by name, following the chart, to make comments or ask questions. In order to receive timely feedback from students, anonymous online surveys are recommended during term to allow implementation of all necessary changes during course, instead of receiving student feedback upon the course completion. The examples of survey questions include the following: *What do you like most about this course so far? What do you like least about the course so far? What suggestions do you have for your instructor to improve your learning experience in this course? What might you do to improve your own learning experiences and those of other students in this course?* Regarding a civil learning environment promotion, students may be asked to take active role in creating classroom norms. In order to improve student performance, other proposed techniques are monitoring students' activity and participation; using exemplars to clearly communicate expectations; providing feedback to improve students' performance; and creating Buddy System that would allow students to study in groups. In order to increase intrinsic motivation, students may be allowed to self-select group members and topics for projects. Discussing time-management strategies, offering specific and timely feedback and regular reminders, and connecting learning to career or other long-term goals may be helpful as well.

The remaining 10 modules of ACUE address methods that may be used to improve student engagement, such as planning and delivering an effective class session; using concept maps and other visual tools; using student achievement and feedback to improve teaching; planning and facilitating effective class discussions; and using various active learning techniques in small groups and large classes. Designing mini lessons for each complex topic may facilitate comprehension of the topic. Encouraging students to write a one-sentence

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summary of the learned topic at the end of lecture allows students to reflect on new acquired knowledge. Using “an engagement trigger” in the beginning of lecture sparks students’ interest in the lesson topic.

Overall, the ACUE course offers over 200 evidence-based approaches to teaching. It includes 180 instructional video demonstrations of 50 faculty members and their students from various teaching institutions in U.S. The course also provides examples of ineffective teaching methods and incorporates critique activities for course participants, that further assist in learning appropriate teaching strategies.