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Effective Teaching Practices by ACUE, Module Reflection

Lida Ahmadi
lida.ahmadi@csusb.edu

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Abstract

The online course, *Effective Teaching Practices* is offered by *The Association of College and University Educators' (ACUE's)*. This is a comprehensive course on teaching methods that are centered on improving student engagement and learning. Below is a summary report of my reflections on selected course modules.

1   Module Reflection

2D Motivating Your Students
In this module I learned about DAPPS formula for the first time. I believe this formula can be very helpful in giving students directions and leading them to success, and I would like to implement it in my teaching in the future. I think this method will work well with students who are already motivated to do well in class, but may be struggling with organization skills.
Challenge: The challenge is how to refine this method to ensure success for less motivated students as well.

Connecting With Your Students (2C)
In this module, I reviewed the technique "get to know your students by name". I actively try to learn my students' names in my classes.
Success: This technique has been successful in my classes. It provides a better connection between me and my students. I see that they positively react to me knowing their names, and it is more likely that they contribute to future discussions.
Challenge: Since I have many students, it is not easy for me to learn all names quickly. I occasionally look at their pictures on roster to remind myself the name of the students that I have not yet learned!

Planing an Effective Class Session (1E) and **Delivering an Effective Lecture (3C)**
I used the technique "an engagement trigger" by presenting a Washington post poll on election 2020. I selected this poll to encourage the topic of "sampling distributions" in statistics. This topic is theoretical, yet critical to designing sample surveys. So, I felt the importance of making a connection between the topic and a very popular (an important) real world situation.
Success: Students were able to understand the need for studying and learning "sampling distributions".

Planing an effective class discussion (3D) – Facilitating Engaging Class Discussions (3E)
I learned more about techniques such as "Sequence questions to progress toward higher order thinking" and "Use wait time". I like applying these approaches specially because I teach math and statistics. By using these methods, students themselves will be able to learn to fill in the gaps in their knowledge slowly and steadily, and it enables students to take active roles in the classroom and allows everyone to contribute (fast thinkers/slow thinkers, extroverts/introverts).
Success: More students contribute to discussions. The second approach allows students to go back to their notes and review if need be.
Challenge: Designing good questions that actually help progressing towards higher order thinking.

Leading the First Day of Class (2A)
I used the following techniques in Winter 2020: 1. I used student interview for the first time in my class. I used this technique because I wanted to know my students' goals and expectations to be able to help them succeed. 2. I also gave a mini lecture. I usually follow active learning strategies in my classes, and I wanted students to see how those are implemented in my courses.
 Challenge: (student interview) Some students mentioned that their goal is just to PASS the course. Now, my challenge is to to motivate these students, so that they actually strive for learning in the class and get the most out of

this course, beyond just passing the course.

Success: (mini lecture) I use this practice in all my classes. It is a good way of introducing my teaching style and setting the classroom tone.

Engaging Under-prepared Students (2E)
In this module, I particularly liked the following techniques: 1. Connect study habits and performance.
2. Provide resources for students to improve their skills.
In the fall quarter, I had a student who did not pass the class despite working hard. I think the reason was lack of resources for her to improve her studying skills. Item 2 in combination with item 1 above could be very beneficial for such students' success. I would particularly like to share "The best ways to learn" with my students.

Success: Since I interact with many first-generation students in my class, I see the need to help my students learn how to study effectively. I have noticed that some of my students are unable to differentiate between what they know and what they don't know. Applying techniques such as "PUT IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS", "BE AN ACTIVE READER" can definitely help them with this matter.
I also have my students take the "Performance Prognosis inventory". I find it an excellent way for my students to assess themselves and make changes accordingly.

Embracing Diversity in Your Classroom (2G)
For this module, I took the disability IAT test. Throughout my teaching years I have had a number of disabled students. When I saw the test, I was curious about whether I have unconscious biases towards able or disabled students. My teaching objective is to help my students achieve their goals regardless of their abilities or disabilities. My result turned out as I expected. I don't show any automatic preferences towards able or disabled people.

Helping Students Persist in Their Studies (2F)
This module was aligned with the current (online) quarter. I implemented the following in my classes: 1. Foster a sense of belonging to an online course community: I use Slack for students to connect and have group discussions about the course content
2. Send messages of encouragement and support: specifically, for the online courses, I feel the need to keep students motivated and on track

Success: Students are using Slack very effectively. I can see that they ask each other questions and help one another understanding the topics.
Challenge: Some students don't take advantage of this recourse.

Using Active Learning Techniques in Small Groups (3A)
I implement the technique "Think-Pair-Share" at the beginning of my classes. I design a few questions regarding the previous concepts, using the Think-Pair-Share activity, and relate those to the new concepts that students will learn in the new lecture.
Success: Students responded positively to this activity. Most of them followed through the instructions, and shared their understanding of the concept very effectively. Also, I was very pleased with the fact that this activity created an opportunity for students to ask other related questions. This activity makes a smooth transition between topics.

Using Student Achievement and Feedback to Improve Your Teaching (5E)
I have been implementing the technique "Obtain feedback at multiple points throughout an online course". Since we are lacking the "face-to-face interaction" in online courses, I think it is especially important to get feedback throughout the course.
Success: The feedback give me insight on how to proceed with some decisions.
Challenge: Only about 60% of students participate in the polls and surveys. (This number significantly improves when answering the poll is part of their homework assignment, or extra credit is given for completion of surveys)

Developing Fair, Consistent, and Transparent Grading Practices (5A)
In the instructor resource for "set grading policy" I noticed the "virtual token" approach. Giving students such an opportunity sounds very interesting to me, as I can see how it can motivate them and encourage them to work harder.

Success: I think MORE students will be determined to perform above and beyond for the prize of "not taking the final exam".
Challenge: As the instructor, the challenge is "for what type of activities should I offer such tokens, and how much time do I have to put in to plan this NEW approach?"

2 Summary

The above is my reflection on selected modules of the course. The course offers numerous techniques to cultivate an engaging classroom that results in deeper learning outcomes. Since taking this course, I have implemented some of the approaches in my math classes. Students have been receptive and responsive to them, and there has been an improvement to the overall quality of my classes.