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ACUE Course Has Applications Beyond the Classroom

Jo Anna Grant
jgrant@csusb.edu

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Abstract

ACUE's Course in Effective Teaching Practices takes faculty beyond learning proven practices to impact student learning to implementing them and reflecting on the experience. For faculty taking the course, but not teaching at the time, many of the practices can be implemented in setting besides the classroom such as in department meetings or in staff development trainings.

When I took ACUE's Course in Effective Teaching Practices, I was directing our campus center for teaching and learning and providing professional development for faculty, but not teaching students. Since the Course requires learning about and implementing new practices, I had to get creative. In the process, I discovered that many of the best practices for good teaching are best practices for many contexts in the work world. What follows are some examples of taking practices from the ACUE course beyond the classroom.

Handling the Meeting Hog

I've often been frustrated in meetings where one voice dominates and derails the agenda for the day. I chose to use the FICA (facts, impact, context, actions) conference planning tool to have a private meeting with a faculty member who was taking over one of my faculty learning communities. Their behavior was not only disruptive but derailing their own progress toward the community's goal as well as others'.

Using this tool to prepare for our conversation was very helpful. It made me very specific in describing the nature of the disruptions and the frequency of them (facts). I was also able to pull some comments from other participants' anonymous feedback to document the on others. This made conversation about something concrete, not just something I found disruptive. I was also able to connect the behaviors and their *impacts* to our community agreements.

The specific comments from others seemed to have a profound effect. The faculty member had been thinking that our community as a great place for intellectual debates, rather than as a community working to support one another in refining their teaching practice (context). As a result, they attended an optional make-up session and began working on their project (actions). I was also able to propose our Pedagogy Café sessions as the right community for these intellectual debates around teaching and learning.

No Memory for Names

I have a terrible time remembering names—especially when people are new to me and the new names and faces come all at one time. That makes it hard for me to quickly pick on my students' names, but this also happens at professional conferences, committee meetings, etc. So, when I was invited to be a guest speaker for a campus group, I choose to combine two techniques to help me learn new names: interacting with people before the class (or meeting in my case) and using table tents.

I greeted everyone at the door, gave them my name, asked for theirs, and asked them to fill out a table tent with their name so I could use it during my guest lecture. Even though I was a visitor, I immediately got to know several of the attendees by name. I also felt that greeting each person individually as they arrived made them feel more comfortable asking me questions. During my lecture I asked the audience to provide examples for me. This allowed me to model (and practice) asking participants' names and

using them later when referring to their examples. At a couple of points, I asked participants to work in small groups with people they didn't know well, introduce themselves, and use each other's names in discussion like the behavior I modeled. At the end, I gave a quick survey with some space for open-ended feedback.

I got to know more names in that 1-hour as a guest speaker than in three weeks of teaching my classes. I still remembered them weeks later and would greet them by name walking across campus or on the street in my town. About a third of the attendees mentioned they enjoyed getting to know new people in their group even though that was not one of my survey questions. What a nice bonus!

These are just two of the many ways that I found to use the tools from the ACUE course in common workplace situations.