<u>REFLECTIVE TEACHING PORTFOLIO</u>

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1. <u>DEFINE YOUR TEACHING PHILOSOPHY.</u>

Teaching is my second or third career and as such, I approach it as an experienced industry professional and C-level executive with the goal of developing my staff. My core teaching philosophy is built around leveraging my outside experience to bring practical situations and a way of thinking to prepare the students to not only get a job but to be highly successful in their careers.

I try to get them to think beyond the course material, to approach problems by "thinking beyond the formula" and if possible, how it applies in their own lives. I want them to enjoy learning, exploring, and analysis such that it carries on outside of and beyond school. They should be comfortable using all the tools and information available: technology, other students, guest speakers, co-workers, and even their own writing. Thinking for yourself is as important as ingesting the basic text or course material and will go farther in helping them in life.

I like my classes to be interactive and fun. I believe in and encourage discussion and group interaction. Social skills, challenging each other, and respect for differing levels of thought and experience are important in the classroom and the workplace.

I treat the students like they are at a real job, that they are new managers and have responsibility for their own success. I tell them in the first class that both my, and their own, expectations should be that in 5-7 years, they will be Vice Presidents and have responsibility for their own business unit, people and results. (Tough to envision when you are a college freshman). As such, they should start thinking and acting like a manager today.

I enjoy learning from the students, their view of life, how they process information, what is important to them. They are all unique and, in many cases, refreshing. That's the number one reward in teaching.

2. HAVE YOU EVER OBSERVED A MASTER TEACHER? IF THE ANSWER IS YES, WHAT DO YOU RECALL MOST FROM THE EXPERIENCE?

I have observed a number of good teachers at FIT. While all have different and personal techniques, there were some common themes and tricks that made an impression that I hopefully try to emulate.

- Introduction of the lesson objectives up front, then reinforcing them throughout the class helped frame and focus the day.

- Mixing lecture and interactive activities made the classes flow and retain their attention.

- Content questioning, both specific and open ended, of various individual students throughout the class,

- Asking students to agree/disagree and discuss with each other.

All basic techniques to make the lesson interactive and not uni-directional.

However, the teacher who made the biggest impression on me was my advisor in graduate school. Cost accounting could be a most uninteresting subject. Tom Dykeman make it one of the best courses I ever took. He taught us to go beyond the numbers and formulas, accounting rules and presentations. His focus was on asking what they meant, how they could be interpreted and how you would defend or justify your opinion to your peers and to him. Every student was treated with respect and as a senior executive.

3. GIVE An EXAMPLE OF YOUR MOST SUCCESSFUL LESSON. WHY DO YOU FEEL IT WAS SUCCESSFUL?

In my FBM 362 Store Operations course, I have a module on Store Location, Layout and Design. I have the teams work on cases with actual mall plans and floor spaces to select and design a location for their store, then detail the base layout and operating configuration. This is in preparation for their final project, where they present a new store operating concept to the class for funding, basically a "pitch". I enjoy the interaction of the teams as much as their creativity of concepts and the reasoning behind their choices.

What makes me feel it is a successful exercise is I can see how they see the practical nature of the exercise, how working together can work, and coming up with a "saleable" logical solution can be rewarding. Five weeks later when they make their final presentation, they have grown as people and as a team, and if it all works, the results show.

4. <u>Do you have an example of an unsuccessful lesson? How did you address the challenges?</u>

One of my least successful lessons was in the FBM 361- Leadership Development Course. It was my first time teaching the course, (an 8:00 am class), and the module was on Managing in a Global Environment. I made the mistake of relying on the text power-points and concepts. The material was boring and difficult for the students to relate to it. I probably came across as bored as well.

The next time I taught that module, I didn't use the text outline or materials. Instead, I used various videos on different cultural business norms to illustrate cultural differences. After assigning each group a different country, I had them research different cultural business norms on-line in class. Using cases I created, each team had to decide how to manage a situation working with a subordinate from that culture. All the teams discussed how they would deal with specific cultural issues in the workplace. It worked.

5. <u>Why are you introducing and/or expanding the use of technology into your teaching?</u>

Using technology in the classroom opens up the world to the students, at that time, in the classroom. It enables moving from the static, medieval model of lecturing to an interactive, dynamic, and easily relatable session for their generation. Also, I believe integrating technology in my lessons can make my class preparation time more effective and expansive, with less effort spent on presentation mechanics. Our industry has become more technology dependent and many of our student's generation are comfortable with technology. We (I) have just started to take advantage of what it has to offer.

6. <u>How do you feel these technology innovations will affect the student experience? How do you think it will it will affect your experience?</u>

As cited above, technology opens up the world to our students and can broaden their perspective. I believe the long-term value of college to a student comes more from developing a method of thinking and learning and less from content. Problem solving, looking at situations with a broad, management perspective, challenging statements and "truths", and creative ideas all should come out of the educational experience. I know when I have hired FIT graduates in my former companies, the successful ones have made that transition to broader thinkers. Technology is a useful tool to enable that thought process development. It can last long beyond the 3-hour session in a classroom or a semester.

Technology is and will be a challenge to me as a teacher. It is much easier to sit and pontificate with a set of Power-points for a class than to make the lesson interactive. With devices in their hands in the classroom, it is tempting for students to tune out the material and text or shop or whatever. My challenge is to make them as interested in the material as I am, such that the technology in hand enables their interest and not detract from it.

7. Please describe new teaching ideas you plan to implement as a result of this technology certificate program.

I have been expanding my use of Blackboard for some time and this program encouraged me to use it even more. Blackboard is not particularly intuitive nor easy to learn on your own. The program has given me more resources to experiment with on the system. Specifically, I have integrated the Library Research Guides in my class this semester. I no longer distribute materials or articles on hard copy but post everything on Blackboard. (For my Continuing Ed students, I use Google drive as they do not have access to Blackboard.) The online syllabus is easy and relatively painless, although the challenge is to get the students used to checking it instead of printing it. Other tools I've used this semester are the Blackboard in class quizzes and Google Surveys. I also have been experimenting with Adobe Spark to improve the institutional look of Blackboard.

8. How will these new technology tools/approaches contribute to your classroom practice?

As stated above, integrating these tools in both my standup and online classes can/should/will broaden and enrich the students experience. That will further my objectives of broadening and enriching the students. I no longer think of a class as a straight lecture and transmitting content to students but instead, how can I increase the interaction and depth of understanding, and how can I use effectively use the tools at hand to do that. The tech tools we have at hand are also key to flipping the classroom.

9. How will you evaluate the success of your activities?

Usually, near the end of the course, I have conversations with students on what worked, what didn't, what would they change and add. That feedback is much more useful to me than the college's evaluation system, and much more helpful in course redesign. Also I will compare their work on the final projects to their earlier work, as described in #3.

10. What do you consider to be the bigger picture items with regard to technology and learning?

Sherry Turkle in "Reclaiming Conversation", along with her other writing, has sounded the warning about technology and human interaction. While I believe technology in and outside the classroom can be a great enabler of learning, it can also be a crutch and barrier to interpersonal communication and social skills. I am seeing that now teaching a class in a computer lab room where the students hide behind the terminal and avoid eye contact with each other. The challenge is to naturally and successfully integrate technology into their social world while increasing their ability to interact with each other.