Three Keys of SoTL

John C.

Reflective practice / Inquiry

Put yourself in the shoes of your student, what am I doing that is working and what am I doing that is not. Am I just teaching or am I facilitating within an environment of learning?

Culture of Enquiry

In my class, students should always feel comfortable asking questions, although due to students where English is not their first language or cultural differences, some students may feel uncomfortable asking questions. For these students, I encourage them to message or email me.

Teachers who have industry experience can by example give real-world answers to their questions. Answers out of a textbook are just that, but when you can take the question and answer it using real-world experience, my students can get more out of their questions. They may even ask follow-up or more probing questions

In my years of teaching and mentoring other instructors, I have sat in classes where the instructor will brush off the question with such answers as "I answered that already", "I will get to it", and never does, or just tried to make up an answer to move on. If I do not know the answer to my student's questions or do not feel that I can adequately answer them at the time, I will put them into our discussion thread (parking lot) and will investigate and be sure to answer it, next class.

When a student asks a question via messenger/email that is course-related, I always add that question to the start of next week's material so that all students can benefit from the question.

Through the course, students are given formal stop-gates to ask questions. At the end of every class, there is always time to ask questions. As well, during key points in any class, there will be an opportunity to ask questions.

At the beginning of the course, students are encouraged to ask questions anytime during the class.

Surveying students

Many Colleges and Universities will survey the students near the end of the course. The perception of many students is that this is a waste of their time. To ask questions at the end of the course may help with future courses but does nothing for them in a real-time environment. This is more of a reactive than proactive approach.

As a father of four, all my children have expressed dissatisfaction at times with the survey system. Every college has great instructors, but we may also have some that require assistance in their teaching. The horror stories that I have heard from my children about instructors have left me shaking my head. Their opinion is that the college does nothing to mitigate or help poor Professors.
If we are going to survey our students, we need to provide a feedback loop that their thoughts, and that concerns are addressed.

Throughout my semester, I have predetermined gates in the curriculum that allow for "start, stop, continue" which allows students to provide feedback on what is being taught, what they found useful, and what should be continued. As well, by examining student emails and messages I can determine if students are struggling with a topic being taught and reach out to determine where we can alter the delivery to make it easier for them to consume.

I teach Project Management Courses, and I have provided supplementary lectures that are an option for the students to view on key terms. I mention the term "CRITICAL PATH" throughout my course. Although we don't dig deep into how to calculate the critical path, I have received many questions on it. I have created a separate lesson calculating critical path. Although students know that this is optional and will not be on the exam, I find that over 90% of the students will review this lesson, and have received positive feedback on the material.

Motivation

My motivation throughout the course is student success. If my students are successful then I am successful as a facilitator of my course. If a student is struggling in the course, why are they? Is it the course material? Delivery of material? Or is there an underlying learning disability that we have not uncovered?

As educators, we need to look beyond the individual student's final mark. If the class average is 90%, we should not assume that is because we are great teachers. Course material could be too easy, marking schemes have not been updated to reflect industry standards, or the overall course does not reflect the industry we are serving.

I have had students with 65% reach out to me and express thanks about a course, and I have other students with 95% tell me they were disappointed by the course. Marks are a way to measure the consumption and memorization of material and not necessarily the ability to apply the material.

Student Success

Student success is a great motivation to me. I have been retired for 5 years now (Financial services industry – Project Management), but have continued to teach as it is a hobby of mine. I have taught for over 45 years in Continuing and Part-time education. When I say it's a hobby, it is something that I enjoy and get great satisfaction in. Because of this, financial rewards are not the primary driver in my teaching.

When students are a success it means we have met their needs and interests. We have engaged them in learning and have prepared them for graduation. Student success should not be measured just by marks, student success is when we have met their needs and interests, regardless of whether they obtained an A or a C in the course. Too many times we measure success by marks, tangible assets, or how much you get paid, we need to be measuring based on the needs and interests.

Value in Education

We are experiencing a decline in the perception of the value of higher education amongst our students, employers, and parents.

In 1950-70 we went through an increase in the value of education. In Ontario Canada, we saw the introduction of colleges to allow for more technical hands-on teaching.

According to Forbes, its peak enrollment at US higher education institutions was 19,610,826. By the spring of 2020, that number had dropped to 17,458,306. They predict that it will dip to under 17 million this spring, making for a net loss of more than 2 ½ million students over the last decade.

Forbes notes that the percentage of aspiring adult learners who believe education will be worth the cost has dropped from 77% to 59% since 2019. Those believing that education will help them get a good job dropped from 89% to 64%

We must change, the introduction of badge-based education will open up higher learning to adults looking for concise and specific educational learning. Instead of taking a 3-year Project management Course, I can take a 2-weekend course on Project Risk and obtain a badge.

We need to migrate to a more customer-centric sector. Our customers mean our students, parents, alumni taxpayers and our employers.

dependent on outside funding.

Amy Taylor

3 Key Characteristics

- Purposeful or intentional question asking (enquiry)
- Reflective practice (especially when things don't lend to the initial outcomes)
- Networking (dedicated time to build network, PD etc)

Motivations

- The desire to improve and continually grow as an educator
- Excitement about the role of teaching
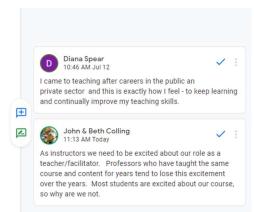- The belief in the value of education

Anahita Izadpanah

3 Keys Characteristics:

- A broad set of practices that engage teachers in looking closer and critically at students learning in order to improve their own courses and programs
- A synthesis of teaching, learning and research in higher education that aims to bring a scholarly lens, the inquiry, the rigor, the disciplinary variety to what happens in the classroom
- It requires a kind of "going meta", reflecting on what is working well and which area needs to

My 5 Motivations

1. Ensuring that practices aren't grounded in opinions (e.g., "It worked for me") or fads, which are sometimes superficial or oversimplify complex concepts and processes
2. Modeling habit of grounding practice in evidence, which I would like to see adopted by others
3. Promoting approaches that are genuinely grounded in student learning, that put students at the goal of the work, and that consider the perspective, experiences, and vulnerability of students (*vis a vis* ensuring that ethics protocols are followed)
4. Engaging in a thoughtful dialogue and moving the discussion of teaching forward
5. Personal reward - increasing impact
6. Voices: I'm adding, following the additional content in the Scholar module, about the importance of adding voices and perspectives to one's own teaching philosophy and

3 Keys

1. Inquiry - systematic inquiry of learning in your own classroom. Helps to have a good question.

2. Reflective practice - closing the loop. Often a step that gets missed when we have a question about learning in our classroom and we try something new. When it works (or doesn't) we just carry on.

3. Going public in a broad way and there are many ways to go public.

Top 3 Motivations

Diana Spear
10:46 AM Jul 12

I came to teaching after careers in the public an private sector and this is exactly how I feel - to keep learning and continually improve my teaching skills.

John & Beth Colling
11:13 AM Today

As instructors we need to be excited about our role as a teacher/facilitator. Professors who have taught the same course and content for years tend to lose this excitement over the years. Most students are excited about our course, so why are we not.

John & Beth Colling
11:17 AM Today

Sometimes as long-term instructors, we get entrenched with the way we have always done it. To us, something that appears to be work or we do it because we like it, may be missing the mark for our students. As well, we must each semester review are material to ensure that it is grounded in fact and is relevant.

Holly Ashbourne
Apr 9, 2021

I love this! This hits home for me when faculty (myself

John & Beth Colling
11:18 AM Today

Totally agree, we need to look at what is working and as important what is not working.