2019 'Exemplary' Overall Instructional Narrative
Michael Bogner, Business Department, YR1 of PAR

Overall Instructional Narrative by Michael Bogner

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Introduction

This is a reflection based on observations of my Dean, my Chair, my Mentor and my students. Dr. LaVergne and Dean Voss were able to observe me and provided me with feedback regarding my teaching in an in-class environment. Dr. Collins reviewed one of my online courses that I taught during fall semester. This is a terrific opportunity for me to explore the differences and similarities of the various observer's views of my strengths, opportunities and how to improve as a professional. As a reference point, I taught 2 in-class courses and 4 online courses during fall semester. During the spring semester, Dean Voss and Dr. Collins were able to observe me and provide me with feedback regarding my teaching in an in-class environment. Dr. LaVergne reviewed one of my online courses that I taught during spring semester. As a reference point, during the first eight weeks of spring semester I taught 1 in-class course and 3 online courses.

Reflection on Strengths

There were several strengths that emerged as themes based on observations of my Dean, my Chair and my Mentor. One common thread was my high level of content expertise. Dean Voss stated, "You have a high level of content expertise." Dr. Collins, my department chair, noted "Viewing some of the videos in his online class it is evident that Mike has high command of the subject." Dr. Collins noted "He has talent but makes everything he does look easy - even though it can be very complex."

Another theme that came out of the three groups is that I am organized in my approach of presenting the course content. For example, Dean Voss noted "You are organized in your approach and are good at demonstrating coding examples. In addition, Dr. Collins stated "Mike is able to articulate the information to students in a manner where it is easy to understand, relevant, and provides step-by-step information. In observation and in discussions with Mike he seamlessly discusses the subject matter that is easy to understand." Finally, Dean Voss noted that "You do a good job of connecting the material to real-world coding application." Several students provided similar comments: "Overall the course is really well done. Having professor Bogner create his own in-class example exercises, that helped cover what was in the homework, really helped out a lot.", "He made the class easier to follow as the apple book wasn't always clear as to what they wanted done.", "This was a difficult course, but I value the wonderful organization provided by Prof. Bogner."

Several strengths emerged as themes based on Dr. Collins review of my online course and the students that were enrolled in the online courses. The first theme was providing personalized videos for the students. Dr. Collins noted that "His class is personalized using videos he has created himself using his own voice to make it a personalized and valuable learning experience." Several students mentioned that the videos which I created were very helpful.

Another theme that emerged was that I encouraged students to ask questions and promptly responded to student's questions. Some of the comments provided by students were: "Mr. Bogner is great at responding to messages and helping me understand things from the book", "Professor Bogner always responds promptly to my emails.", "I appreciated Professor Bogner's quick responses to emails that I sent.", "Professor Bogner was knowledgeable, very helpful and always available to provide a quick response to questions."

Finally, another theme that emerged from Dr. Collins and online student comments was that I was very patient and understanding when interacting with students.

Reflection on Fall Opportunities and Spring Improvement

There was one opportunity that Dean Voss mentioned in his fall evaluation comments which was to explore ways to increase student dialog and discussion. That was one of the areas that I wanted my mentor, Dr. LaVergne to focus on when she observed my class. Dr. LaVergne provided me with several examples on how to better engage students during class. This is an area that I worked on after Dean Voss and Dr. LaVergne provided their comments for the remaining in-person classes during fall semester and that I will continue to focus on in the future.

Dean Voss noted that I should explore ways to increase student dialog and discussion. Dean Voss specifically noted "In this session, it was difficult to determine if all students were tracking along with the information presented. Developing your strategies to increase student dialogue or engagement (even when you are in "presentation mode") would help you better determine which students are on the same page with you. Frequently, the same few (1 or 2) students asked clarifying questions...however, some students did not engage in dialog with you so in these cases it is unknown if they were understanding the material you were covering. In addition, he stated "I did notice that when you asked questions generally of the group, some students were reticent to answer and occasionally you were left to answer your own questions. You might think about calling on students by name to increase ownership of their learning. One strategy I have seen instructors use is to have a fish bowl filled with ping pong balls (each with a student's) name. When it comes time to provide a response which demonstrates active engagement and ownership for learning, the instructor reaches into the bowl and calls a name."

 A goal of mine for the next evaluation (spring) is to increase student dialog and discussion by building a community of learners. Working successfully on a team is very important for computer programmers. Since the majority of the classwork consists of actually writing code, I plan on creating teams consisting of two students. This will allow the students to get to know each other and will be available to assist their team mate when working on in-class coding projects especially if I'm assisting another student. Hopefully this will provide students with experience working as a team.

Instead of using a fish bowl filled with ping pong balls like Dean Voss suggested, I've created an iOS app that I will use when selecting students to answer my questions in class. Since each student will have a team mate, the student called upon will be able to have a discussion with their team mate before providing an answer. Hopefully, this will solve the problem of me left with answering my own question and it will get students involved in discussion. In addition, I plan on asking additional questions as I'm going over the material in class. Hopefully this will provide students with experience working as a team and develop a community of learners.

Dean Voss noted in his spring evaluation comments "You definitely have shown improvement in terms of using strategies to increase student engagement! You call on students by name and students appear to take greater ownership for their learning." In addition, Dr. Collins noted the following: "Fun way to call on students with his iPhone to identify who gets to answer. The students are having engaging conversations and paying attention. Mike encourages students to think about the questions he is asking. Students are comfortable with his approach and join in.

Dr. Collins did note the following: "Mike may want to ask the students if they have any questions as he goes through his demonstrates." I've started to ask additional questions after I've covered a topic during the two in-class courses that I'm teaching during the second eight weeks of spring semester.

Reflection on Spring Opportunities

There was one opportunity that Dean Voss mentioned in his spring evaluation comments which was to meet with him to discuss ways to create a more student-friendly tone in my CIS265 syllabus. I will be arranging a meeting with Dean Voss before the end of spring semester to further discuss. In Dr. LaVergne's review of my on-line class, we discussed an enhancement to the videos that I've been creating for my on-line classes. That enhance would be to add captioning to all videos to ensure accessibility for both visually impaired students as well as those students who just like to see the text version as a reinforcement. I will be talking to the CTL to find out the best way to create captioned videos. In addition, based on comments from Dr. Collins, I will be seeking input from my on-line students to schedule on-line office hours to accommodate them.

Reflection on Specific Student Comments

The student's observations were overall positive. There were two comments made by students that I would like to address and that I will be focusing on during Spring semester and the future. The first comment was "The instructor wasn't really an instructor. The class is just reading an 800-page book and hoping we can piece everything together. Not the instructor's fault as it is an online class, however video lectures would probably help students absorb information better." Based on these comments, I plan on creating additional instructional videos to cover key topics for all the online classes that I will be teaching.

The second comment was "He is obviously a competent developer, and he fully understands how software works. Having said that, he is new to the Apple platform and to Swift in general, so it's obvious that he's not yet an expert in the class that he's teaching. This isn't an indictment of his competency. He's well prepared in class and he seems eager to learn the intricacies of Swift. Soon enough, I have no doubt in my mind that he'll be an expert in Swift." The student was correct in their assessment. Swift is a programming language that was fairly new to me when I started fall semester. To work towards becoming an expert in Swift, I will be taking several courses in the future via Udemy related to Swift and iOS app development. One of those courses is listed in the Professional Development section of my IDP. In addition, I will be assisting in the development of the Rise app and exploring other app development opportunities that would provide both me and my students with valuable real-world development experience using Swift.

Self-Reflection

Based on my first semester and 1/2 of teaching, I feel that there are times in-class or online where I may not be able to explain the concepts covered to students in the best way possible so that they will understand the concepts. For each class that I teach throughout the semester I need to understand the material completely before talking about the concept in class. This means I must be prepared to the best of my ability when covering a concept with students. I still need to continue to focus on student engagement. Some classes I'm able to engage the students, while other classes the students are not as engaged. In the future, I will monitor the CTL calendar for workshops/conferences on increasing student engagement. Finally, I will continue to talk with my peers about the most effective teaching style for computer programming classes.

Future Professional Development Goals for Academic Year 19/20

 Like I mentioned previously, I will be creating additional instructional videos to cover key topics for all the online classes that I will be teaching. In addition, I will be taking several courses in the future via Udemy to enhance my Swift and app development skills. I will continue to enhance my skills in programming languages that I will be teaching. I've enrolled in Udemy courses that cover Python and Java so that I can keep up to date with the latest trends in the languages that I teach. In addition, if funds are available, I will attend the PyCon Conference in May. The courses and conference are listed in the Professional Development section of my IDP.

Due to the fact that I teach several courses on-line each semester, I will work on obtaining the eLearning Educator Microcredential by Fall of 2019. I've started that process by enrolling in the ELearning at MCC course that is offered through Canvas. After I complete that course, I will enroll in the Canvas for Online Engagement, and Quality Matters & Beyond courses to complete the Microcredential. In addition, I will monitor the CTL calendar for workshops/conferences on increasing student engagement during the 2019-20 school year.