

The Scholarship Of Excellence In Teaching (SET) Fellowship

Synopsis by Joan Naake, Director of SET

February 3, 2022

The idea for the Scholarship of Excellence in Teaching Fellowship originated with Dr. Sanjay Rai in 2017. He charged the College deans to implement SET in order to enhance student success. The College deans elected Dean Sharon Fechter to provide oversight of the fellowship and asked me to direct the fellowship, which began in January of 2018.

Part of the methodology of the Scholarship of Excellence in Teaching (SET) is based on an excellent book –Taking College Teaching Seriously: Pedagogy Matters!: Fostering Student Success Through Faculty-Centered Practice Improvement, which was given to me by Dean Fechter. The book details a student success project in which faculty from 30 community colleges participated and which was headed by La Guardia Community College. The focus of this project and the focus of the SET Fellowship are identical: to enhance student success and to enhance student understanding, learning, and achievement. In practical terms, this means significantly decreasing DFW grades.

SET begins in the spring semester each year with 12 faculty, both full-time and part-time. These faculty are selected through an application process and letters of recommendation from their chair and dean. The faculty earn 1.5 ALT ESH per semester for one year.

In the Spring, there are three major aspects:

1. BI-WEEKLY DISCUSSION POSTS

The faculty participate in bi-weekly Discussion Posts, which require in-depth pedagogical analysis. Below are the STEPs the faculty complete. **Please see addendum #1**

2. MONTHLY BOOK READINGS AND MONTHLY MEETINGS—Please see Addendum #2

The faculty read and provide reflections on one book a month. The most recent book was Jose Antonio Bowen's Book, published in October 2021—*Teaching Change: How To Create Independent Thinkers, Using Resilience, Relationships, and Reflection*.

3. DISCUSSION in the Bi-Weekly Discussion Board and at the Monthly meetings of the strategy that faculty want to develop and implement in the Fall to enhance student success and understanding. At the May Meeting faculty identify and describe their strategies and how they will assess them.

In the FALL, there are five major aspects:

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY

Faculty implement their strategies to enhance student success and learning.

2. BI-WEEKLY DISCUSSION BOARDS:

Faculty discuss the implementation of their strategy: its successes and its failures and the ways to improve it.

3. MONTHLY MEETINGS:

Faculty discuss the implementation of their strategies and the monthly assigned book or reading.

4. ASSESMENT INSTRUMENT:

Faculty create an assessment mechanism by which to evaluate their implemented strategy.

5. PRESENTATION OF STRATEGIES AND ASSESSMENTS

Faculty present their implemented strategies and assessments to the Montgomery College Community.

RESULTS:

Faculty are reinvigorated in their teaching and student success is greatly enhanced. For example, one math faculty member completely revamped her online Calculus 1 course to ensure by scaffolding the lessons and increased student success dramatically. Another faculty member globalized her film course, which contributed to the engagement, agency, and inclusivity of her students; she had no DFW rates in her course. Several faculty increased the critical thinking skills of their students—no easy task—by requiring students to complete John Paul’s “Critical Thinking Questions” in their reading reflections. This was difficult at first, but students felt truly empowered by the end of the course and will be able to employ these critical thinking skills throughout their academic journey.

NUMBERS AND MULTIPLIER EFFECT

Since at the end of year five, 2022, there will have been 60 faculty who have participated and who have conservatively taught over 100 students in a year, this means that at least 6,000 students have been positively affected. This number does not include their future students, who will obviously benefit. In addition, the faculty are required to give talks in their department meetings about the strategies they have implemented, so there is the multiplier effect as well.

Addendum

Addendum #1

STEPS FACULTY COMPLETE IN EACH BI-WEEKLY DISCUSSION BOARD.

STEP 1--Briefly describe what you taught in the week or weeks indicated above. Since you cannot describe everything you have taught, please select the most meaningful events.

You may want to review the PowerPoint I sent you; it has examples of what previous faculty have done. Please include as much detail as other faculty in different disciplines may need.

STEP 2--Explain what strategies you used to help students to understand and to be successful, especially for those concepts that are more difficult for students to learn. (This may give other faculty some useful pedagogical ideas.)

STEP 3--Indicate what you might do differently next time you teach this material--areas that you would like to enhance. For example, would you include more active learning, student engagement, connections to their own lives or contemporary events or ideas, connections to previous material/classes, higher order thinking, scaffolding, etc. You may want to consult Appendix below.

STEP 4--Please attach any readings, handouts, descriptions of classroom activities, lecture notes, videos, slides, formative assessments etc. that you think would assist other faculty in understanding your pedagogical practices or teaching strategies. Please remember that we would love to see a short video-clip or partial recording of any of your particularly interesting strategies.

STEP 5--Next to any strategies that you have employed in STEP 2, please place a pedagogical tag that indicates the type of strategy in a highlighted parentheses--(Community Building). Please do not just lump them together at the end of STEP 2. Please place them after the strategy you describe. A list of the pedagogical tags is listed in the Appendix below.

STEP 6--Please respond to the posts of three other faculty, using appreciative inquiry, that is using positive comments, suggestions that another tag is also appropriate, and "what if" questions rather than "you should" comments. In other words, focus on what is working well and asking questions about areas that the faculty members have indicated they want to enhance.

Addendum #2

BOOKS READ AND DISCUSSED IN SCHOLARSHIP OF EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING PROGRAM— FACULTY COHORT 2021

- February—Teaching Effectively With Zoom by Dan Levy
- March—Creating Wicked Students by Paul Hanstedt
- April-- Teach Students How To Learn: Strategies You Can Incorporate into Any Course to Improve Student Metacognition, Study Skills, and Motivation by Sandra Yancy McGuire
- May—The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking by Richard Paul and Linda Elder and Selections from Classroom Assessment Techniques by Thomas Angelo and Patricia Cross
- August- How To Be an Antiracist by Ibram Kendi
- September—What the Best College Teachers Do by Ken Bain
- October—Student Engagement Techniques 2nd ed. by Elizabeth Barkley and Claire Howell Major and excerpts from Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed
- November—Equity Centered, Trauma Informed Education by Alex Shevrin Venet
- December—Teaching Change: How To Develop Independent Thinkers Using Relationships, Resilience, and Reflection by Jose Antonio Bowen