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NC STATE UNIVERSITY
The Graduate School

CoAT
CERTIFICATE OF
ACCOMPLISHMENT IN TEACHING

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Certificate of Accomplishment in Teaching Program
Workshop Reflection Assignment #1
FIT: Fundamentals in Teaching – Introduction to Teaching Workshop

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Part I: Describe

Title of the Workshop/Event: FIT: Introduction to Teaching

Purpose Statement: The purpose of this event was to present information about the characteristics of learning environments, concepts for developing basic lesson plans, and Bloom's Taxonomy.

Lead Presenter(s): Dr. Barbi Honeycutt

Date(s)/Location of the Event: 12:00 PM on 8/23/2011, Tally Student Center Blue Room

Approximate Number of People Attended the Workshop: 20

Brief Description:

This workshop was an interactive event where the basic concepts of teaching were presented. The workshop included activities that reinforced those concepts. The workshop was held in a small classroom environment where Dr. Honeycutt presented to a small group of graduate students. The presentation style was extremely interactive; activities included group discussions, full classroom discussion involving all groups, a game, reading, and an extended period at the conclusion for asking questions.

Part II: Analyze

1. Why did you choose to attend this workshop? What were you hoping to learn?

   First and foremost, I attended this workshop because it was required for me to enter both the PTP and COAT graduate programs. Additionally, I have always been interested in teaching and, in turn, learning about the different ways people learn. I know how I learn, but I realize that I am unique and others may learn in a number of different ways. In order to become an effective teacher, I felt I needed an understanding of some basic concepts of how to teach and how people learn. Although I have been a teaching assistant for several years, as an engineering student I have not been able to take formal classes on teaching of any kind. I am eager to learn about teaching, and I believed this workshop would give me a good foundation for structuring the overwhelming amount of information I am likely to learn about teaching over the next two semesters.

2. What assumptions did you have before participating in this workshop?

   Before attending the workshop, I made the natural assumption that I would be in a classroom-like environment where I would be given a presentation that introduced some basic concepts about teaching and learning. I came prepared to listen and take notes, and I wondered whether the instructor would demonstrate some of the concepts she was teaching us in her own presentation. I

had a few questions I was hoping would be addressed, including how to handle students packing up early in class as well as how to deal with disruptive students in class, since at one time I had a knack for being a disruptive student myself. I also thought most of the participants would be graduate students starting the PTP and COAT programs. I have been to several workshops, both online and in-person, where Dr. Honeycutt was the instructor, so I felt I knew what to expect from her in terms of presentation style and how she would convey information. I also knew that she was very open to answering questions at any time, so I felt comfortable asking questions as soon as they came to me during the workshop.

3. Were your assumptions correct or incorrect? Explain how your thinking was either supported (meaning your assumptions were validated) or how your thinking was changed (meaning your assumptions were incorrect)

Most of my pre conceived notions about the workshop turned out to be correct, but there were certainly things that were different from what I expected. The workshop did take place in a classroom like environment; however, there were only chairs with no desks and tables. Dr. Honeycutt acknowledged this from the beginning of the workshop and I was very intrigued by how she worked around that situation. Some of the workshop was a presentation where I listened and took notes, but at least half of the workshop was spent performing interactive activities and answering the numerous questions students had. The workshop was much more interactive than I expected. Dr. Honeycutt introduced effective learning strategies and then incorporated most of them into her presentation, which is something I was wondering whether or not she would do. She did this so well that it gave me an example for how it could be done in my own teaching. I took particular note of the fact that she never stood and talked in front of the class for more than 10 or 15 minutes without asking questions or giving us a small group activity. This kept me interested throughout the workshop, which I consider a relatively significant achievement. My notions about Dr. Honeycutt answering all of our questions about how to get started with certain tasks or how to address certain scenarios was also correct, as she took at least 20 minutes at the end of the workshop to address questions on a number of teaching topics. I was somewhat incorrect in my assumption about who would be attending the workshop. Only 3 or 4 other students were beginning the PTP or COAT programs, the rest were other graduate students who wanted to learn about teaching, and to my surprise a number of adults attended the workshop as well. My expectations about how Dr. Honeycutt would present the information and go about teaching the workshop were mostly correct, but she did an especially excellent job of combining lecture information with interactive activities. This was enlightening given my background in engineering, which comes with a lack of exposure to active learning.

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4. What information was most meaningful for you? Be specific.

Most of the information presented in this workshop was useful in some way, but there were some specific topics that peaked my interest. First, the information on how to write effective learning outcomes was particularly valuable. I have noticed these "learning outcomes" on syllabi in classes I have taken and they are usually a group of big descriptive words strung together with no real meaning. We discussed the process of developing and writing these outcomes and even wrote out examples for a class we might teach. Second, the information on how to develop an effective lesson plan was interesting because it gave me something to compare with my current approach. I was certainly missing some elements of a good lesson plan, but I realized I was on the right track. I had never examined Bloom's Taxonomy in any detail, and I realized it could be a valuable tool for writing lesson plans and designing learning outcomes. Lastly, Dr. Honeycutt introduced a number of classroom assessment techniques other than the basic homework/exams that I had not been exposed to since high school. As I stated earlier, she incorporated these techniques into her presentation at this workshop. The effectiveness of these techniques surprised me, since I personally tend to learn from reading and reflecting on my own.

5. How do you think you will use this information? Be specific.

Since I am participating in the PTP program, I am teaching half of the classes in a senior level industrial engineering course this semester. Bloom's Taxonomy for designing and writing effective learning outcomes is something I will apply immediately as I am preparing lesson plans for those classes. Should I encounter any disruptions or students leaving class early, I will be able to handle those situations in a calm and appropriate matter as I now have guidelines for addressing them. The classroom assessment techniques, including in-class assignments, group discussion and responses, think-pair-share, and the occasional game will be a part of future lesson plans for my classes, as I now believe they are essential to keeping students interested when there are so many distractions for them at any given moment. There was a great deal of new information presented in this workshop, and these responses are geared toward the information that stood out to me personally.

6. What information do you still need to learn related to this workshop? What is your plan for learning more about this topic?

If there were one topic that was briefly touched on in this workshop but that I would like to get more information about, it would be "How do I get students to answer questions in class?" I always have a hard time getting students to respond to me since my current class is at 8:00 AM. The idea of an icebreaker activity is one step in this direction, but I am very interested in learning all there is to know about getting students to willingly participate in class. Especially since as a student, I often knew the answer and didn't speak up because I didn't want to be the one always answering the questions, I felt it would be annoying to do that, but I also felt bad for the instructor when no one would answer. My first step to getting more information on this topic is to attend the "Effective Questioning Techniques" workshop offered through the graduate school. After attending the workshop, I can ask the instructor about the best resources for new ideas and effective techniques for getting the class to participate.