

Community of Practice

Implementing Inquiry to Engage Student Voices: A Learning Investigation

Spring Semester 2011

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On May 9, the students in my course completed the end of course survey for the chosen objectives determined to monitor if student expectations for the course met my perceptions regarding how I thought I was meeting those same objectives.

Twenty-five out of 27 of the students replied to the end of course survey.

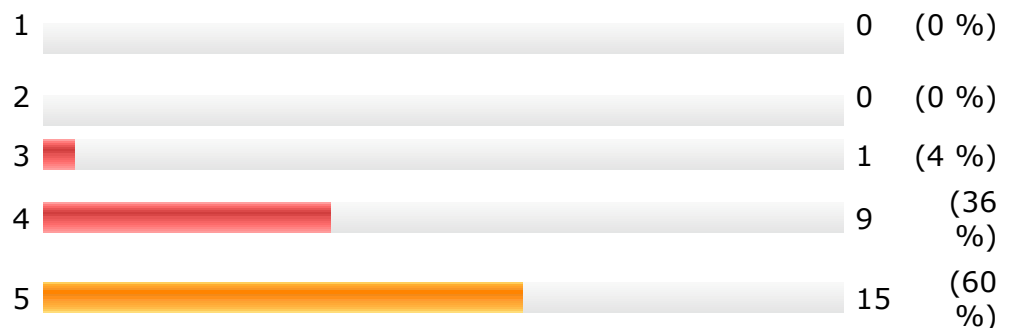
Below, survey results from the students are followed by a brief narrative addressing each area. The narratives are summaries of my journal entries throughout the semester. Overall, I was happy to note that the majority of student responses matched my own feelings regarding my perceptions of my performance in class. It is nice to have these “answers” so that I can feel more confident in my ability to meet my students’ needs.

Survey

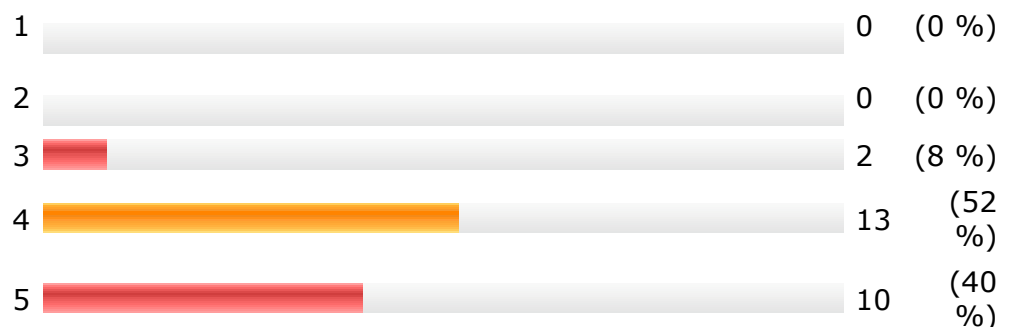
1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Neutral, 4 Agree, 5 Strongly Agree

Instructor Planning and Preparation

† *The assignments or projects were relevant to the course objectives*



† *The level of difficulty of the course content and assignments was appropriate*



- ***The assignments or projects were relevant to the course objectives***

I use course objectives in planning my course curriculum so I felt confident that my assignments and projects addressed course objectives. I took time to demonstrate to the students what objectives we were focusing on with our various activities and projects.

According to the survey, the majority of the class agreed with this statement. 24/25.

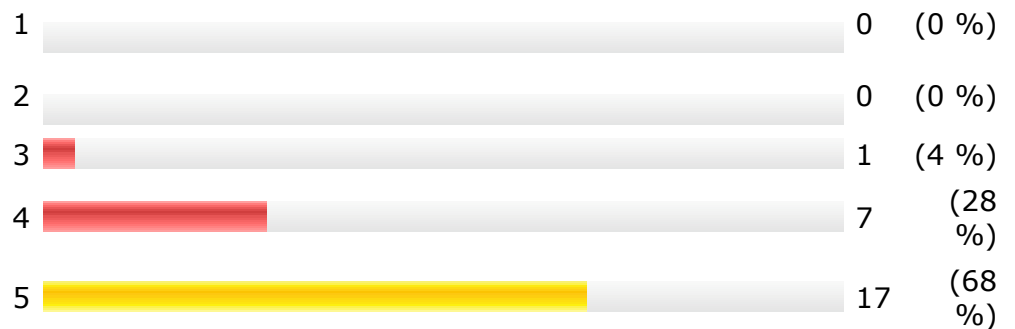
- ***The level of difficulty of the course content and assignments was appropriate***

Throughout the course, I stretched the students' critically thinking as they had to understand new material and then apply that material to their field experience. I always scaffolded the learning and arranged in class work time for the planning of their field experience which did give them the benefit of individual guidance as they were all working with students of various needs. I think that they all felt successful in providing individualized learning plans for their students and in monitoring their students' progress.

According to the survey, the majority of the class agreed with this statement. 23/25.

Classroom or Online Environment

- ‡ ***The environment encouraged students to ask questions and to voice my beliefs/opinions***



- ‡ ***The instructor created an environment of respect and rapport (thus creating a culture for learning)***





- **The environment encouraged me to ask questions and to voice my beliefs/opinions**

In many of my individual classes, I asked the students to respond to questions. I try to acknowledge students' responses positively and guide them in the right direction if they don't seem to answer the question correctly. I realize that by giving constructive feedback to students' responses, they are more willing to speak in front of the class. There were some days that I felt like no one had any energy to respond or no motivation to respond. That may be a measure of how comfortable they were with the topic.

According to the survey, the ,24/25 students agreed with this statement

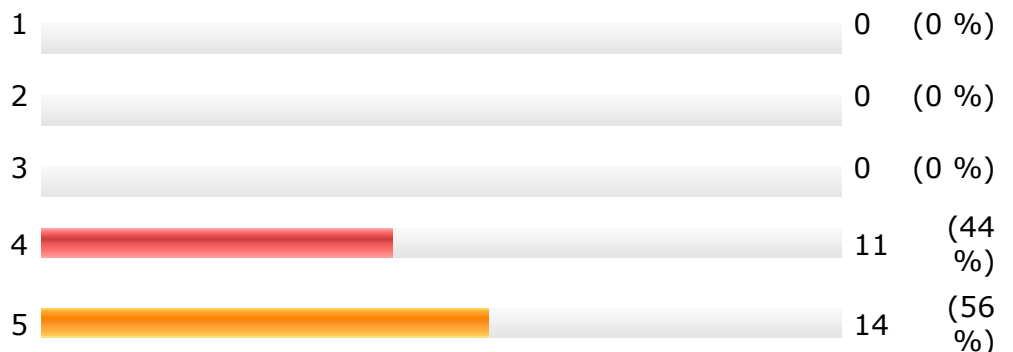
- **The instructor created an environment of respect and rapport (thus creating a culture for learning)**

Respect—I told many students that their questions were good and their ideas were appropriate. I went over on time for myself. I never really leave myself enough time to have students thoroughly investigate or apply the material. Always trying to do too much. I think that students get frustrated by that-I know I do. I do try to be respectful of their time in the classroom as well as their capacity for engaging in lecture. I am not very good at using humor and tend to be quite serious so I work hard at lightening the mood in the classroom to facilitate rapport. I also try to develop my intrapersonal skills by chatting briefly about their lives, current events, and stress levels at various times of the semester.

According to the survey, 25/25 students agreed with this statement.

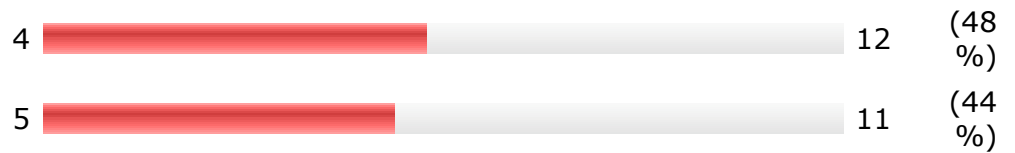
Instruction

- † ***The instructor generated interest in the subject and engaged students in learning.***

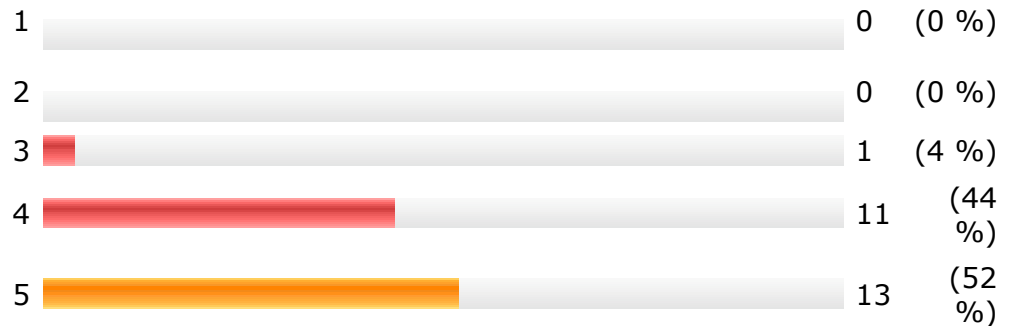


- † ***The assignments and discussions encouraged students to think critically***

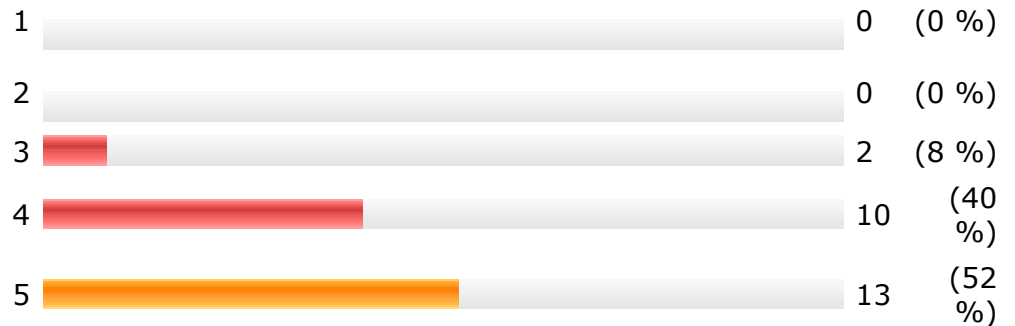




† **The grading and evaluation of work was understandable, consistent, and accurate.**



† **The examinations and/or assignments were valid assessments of what the student learned or is learning**



Instruction

- **The instructor generated interest in the subject and engaged students in learning.**

This area was difficult for me. Most of my journals indicate that some students were not engaged and that some were definitely tired—maybe because it was an 8:00 class. I did notice that students appeared engaged and I did not have problems with laptops or cell phones distracting them because of my class policies. They did ask questions about different topics or items which indicates a level of engagement and critical thinking. It was easiest to observe engagements when students worked collaboratively. I always circulate throughout the classroom as students are working and that seems to keep them engaged. I think we all have the propensity to disengage, but sometimes just knowing we are being “supervised” keeps us on task even as adults!

According to the survey, 25/25 students agreed with this statement.

- **The assignments and discussions encouraged me to think critically**

I try very hard to encourage critical thinking. Usually once we learn the basic information, we have to apply the information in some manner in class or in a project/assignment. I was happy to see that students overall felt that they were encouraged to think critically. It is hard to monitor this with discussion in the class and sometimes I wondered if they were able to critically apply some of our material. It was much easier in their

assignments to see that they went above basic knowledge of the material to analyzing assessment results and planning for instruction!!

According to the survey, 23/25 students agreed with this statement.

- **The grading and evaluation of work was understandable, consistent, and accurate.**

In reviewing my journals, I mentioned consistently my use of rubrics and examples for evaluating their work. Students usually do quite well on my assignments because they understand them due to time I take to demonstrate. I was quite pleased to see students successfully planning for their field experiences as I explained and demonstrated the criteria for the planning sheets, but these were extremely individualized by the needs of the children that they were working with.

According to the survey, 24/25 students agreed with this statement.

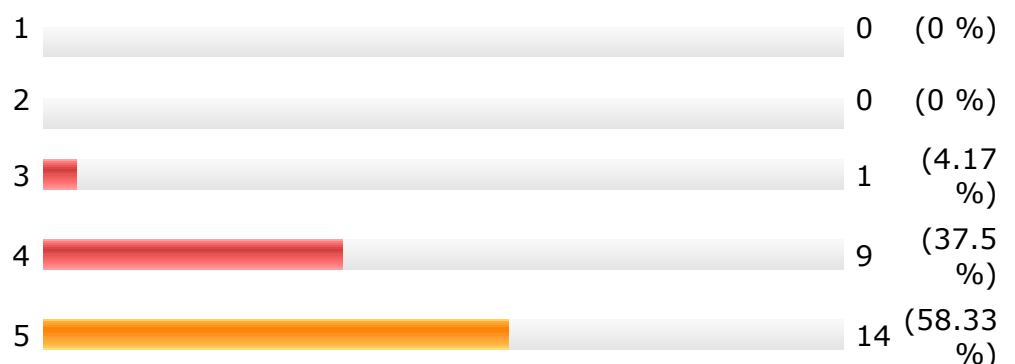
- **The examinations and/or assignments were fair assessments of what I learned**

Our main assessment at the end of this course has been final report and reflection of the field experience. I am currently working on those evaluations but am pleased to see that students are performing well on those. Throughout the semester, I commented in my journals that when students didn't do well collectively, that was an indication to me to spend more time on that topic/item. In going back to effective teaching, I try to align my objectives, teaching and evaluations. This usually results in my students being successful. I noted that when students were not successful, it was either due to absences, lack of engagement, or confusion. If they were confused, I placed the responsibility on myself and them to review the material and determine where the breakdown in communication or understanding was.

According to the survey, 23/25 students agreed with this statement.

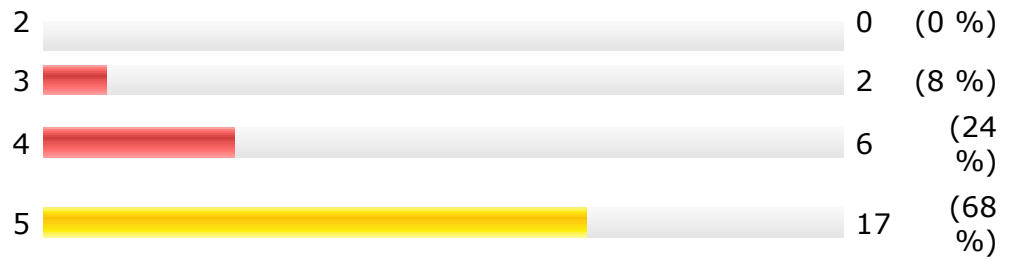
Professional Responsibilities

- † **The instructor modeled professional dispositions**



The instructor was available outside of class for consultation or advisement





Professional Responsibilities

- **The instructor modeled professional dispositions.**

I consistently try to model the behaviors that I expect from my students from being on time, being prepared and being respectful. I believe for the most part that I accomplish that goal.

- *According to the survey, 23/25 students agreed with this statement.*

- **The instructor was available outside of class for consultation or advisement**

I commented in my journal that weekly I offered some type of extra support if students needed it. I frequently mentioned to students that they could make an appointment with me if they needed extra direction with something. I had two students meet with me outside of class time during the entire semester.

- *According to the survey, 23/25 students agreed with this statement.*