

**Review completed for Sandra Robbins**

**Reviewer: Sarah Jackson**

**Date: March 2007**

## **Peer/Mentor Review Instrument**

### **Planning and Preparation—Syllabus, Documents, and Conversation**

- **What does the syllabus tell you about this person's overall approach to or philosophy of teaching?**

*My philosophy of teaching takes into considerations the characteristics of adult learners, active engagement strategies, and fostering the development of problem solving and critical thinking skills in my students. Before Sandy presented for my class, we discussed my approach to teaching and she replicated my philosophy within her instruction.*

- **How is the person taking the learners into account in the class?**

*Sandy and I discussed the needs of my students and how I try to create a supportive learning environment by understanding the goals of my students. We discussed the varying experiences of my students related to the topics Sandy was going to discuss and how we could use this information to select appropriate activities and teaching strategies to support the students' learning.*

### ***Instructional Strategies (Modes)***

- **What instructional strategies are used in this course? (Examples: Lecture/discussion; Problem Based Learning, Service Learning, etc.)**

*In the particular sessions that Sandy lead, she utilized similar strategies that I have previously used and have found successful with my students. Sandy asked me before the sessions, what would be the best way to organize the lecture and activities to best meet the needs of my students. She used a balance of lecture, discussion, and small group work throughout the presentation.*

- **Why are those strategies used?**

*Sandy seems to have a good understanding of the characteristics of adult learners and selected instructional strategies that matched her perspective. She incorporated a variety of strategies and presented information in a practical and relevant manner that kept the students interested in the information.*

- **What is the relationship between the goals and objectives of the course and the strategies begin used?**

*Based on the objectives I identified for the sessions Sandy was leading, she selected strategies that allowed my students to consider what they know about the topic (i.e., small group discussion) and how the information is relevant to the other topics discussed in the course (i.e., linked systems discussion), as well as strategies to help the students organize the new information being presented (i.e., webbing activity).*

### ***Environment***

- **How does the physical or virtual environment affect the teaching/learning transaction in this class?**

*Sandy did a great job of adapting her teaching style to match the present learning environment. She utilized technology available and moved around the room during small group activities. Sandy seemed to consider the physical space of the classroom and what she needed to do to keep a small group of students engaged within a large space.*

- **How does the time of day (or the asynchronous nature of an online class) impact the teaching/learning transaction?**

*Sandy presented during a late class session (7:20-10:00pm) in which the students are already tired and many times hard to engage and keep motivated during class. Sandy was aware of the fact that students may be tired during her presentation and balanced her teaching strategies to keep them engaged.*

### ***Teacher***

- **What educational theories or beliefs ground this person's perspective toward education?**

*From my conversations with Sandy, she recognizes the fact that many adult learners prefer to be active rather than passively engaged during class sessions. She created a learning experience that portrayed an understanding of adult learners. Sandy considers the principles of universal design and the use of a variety of teaching strategies to keep students motivated and engaged.*

### ***Content***

- **Has the person reflected on the place of this course within the curriculum of her/his program and the traditions of her/his field?**

*Sandy's presentation was inline with the objectives of the course and the ECIS program. She portrayed the topics in her presentation with the beliefs of the field and the program; highlighting what we want our students to know and be able to do as a result of the information shared.*

- **Does the course reflect these considerations?**

*Sandy was able to create her presentations to support the vision of the course and the program*

- **How does the course content fit in with the educational programs of which it is a part?**

*The session Sandy lead reflected the competices that students are expected to demonstrate as a result of the course. She highlighted these goals within the objectives she set for the students during her presentations.*

### **How does the course content create personal meaning in my students' lives?**

*The topics covered in the course are relevant to the experiences that our students will encounter as intervention specialist in the areas of early intervention and early childhood*

*special education. Sandy expanded on the information she presented to discuss examples of how the information will look during implementation with young children and families.*

### ***Style***

- **How does the teacher describe his/her teaching style?**

*Sandy discussed with me that she tries to create a safe learning environment where questions, comments, and ideas are welcome. She does not prefer to lecture for long periods of time, and I try to use my creativity to promote an active, hands-on approach to teaching and learning. She respects her students and hopes that the learning process is more of a partnership than one sided.*

- **Why does the educator believe he/she has developed this style?**

*Sandy has developed her learning style by considering what she appreciates as a learner and then adding to that the importance of considering diverse students and learning styles. She wants to ensure that her students feel that she cares about them and their learning. She wants to create a learning experience that is memorable and applicable to their personal and professional lives.*

### ***Assessment***

- **What types of assessment are used?**

*Sandy only had the opportunity to lead two class sessions and utilized informal assessment strategies to evaluate to what extent students were meeting the session objectives. Perhaps, more structured evaluations procedures could have been planned to ensure a solid understanding of what students were achieving.*

- **Why are these assessments used?**

*With Sandy having to present in an already established class structure, creating formal evaluation procedures was a challenge within the learning situation.*

- **How are assessment results used?**

*Through Sandy's observation, she adjusted her teaching style to keep students motivated and engaged, by addressing their questions, cueing into their confusion, and presenting information in new means to ensure students were comfortable with the topic.*

- **How is the assessment tied to the overall goals of a program or accrediting body?**

*The goals of the program are to ensure that students meet the competencies identified by accreditation organizations. Sandy ensured students meet the objectives of the session that are directly tied to the course competencies.*

### ***Learners***

- **What types of learners does the instructor believe are in the classroom?**

*Sandy always holds the assumption that there are always diverse groups of students consisting of various learning styles, preferences, as well as abilities. Sandy believes that adult learners always bring their personal perspectives and experiences so every learner in the classroom has something valuable to contribute.*

### **In-Class Observations**

#### ***Instructional Strategies (Modes)***

- **What instructional strategy was used during this class session? (Examples: Lecture/discussion; Problem Based Learning, Service Learning, etc.)**

*Sandy did not solely rely on one instructional strategy during the lesson, but utilized of variety of methods to present the information to the students and keep them actively engaged.*

*Lecture: Sandy maintained a balanced pace during the presentation that I believe was response to the student's needs. She communicated effectively and clearly, expanding upon the ideas presented in the PowerPoint and used examples to clarify information the students struggled to understand (i.e., types of antecedent example). At times, she moved her focus of the presentation and had not changed the PowerPoint slides.*

*Small Group Activities: Sandy did a great of transiting students from lecture to small group activities during the presentation by introducing the activities clearly, highlighting the purpose of the activity and relevance to the overall topic being discussed. Sandy may want to consider debriefing with students further after the activities so students are able to hear the perspectives of others in the class. I know, however, that time was limited for such activities during her presentations.*

*Webbing Activity: I have not used a webbing activity with my students, but I thought this was a great strategy to help students organize the information that Sandy was presenting. I would encourage Sandy to explain the purpose of the technique further so students also have an understanding of why she selected to organize the activity in the manner that she did. Additional explanation of the webbing activity may have encouraged students to further use the webbing technique throughout the presentation*

**• Why are those strategies used for this content?**

*Sandy was aware that the students had previous exposure to the topic she was covering. Rather than just using lecture to present the information, Sandy encourage students to consider what they remembered about the topic and used the students' responses to guide what areas she spent time focusing on.*

**• What is the relationship between the goals and objectives of the course and the strategies begin used?**

*Sandy selected strategies that supported students in achieving the objectives identified for the course session.*

### ***Environment***

- **What is the physical or virtual environment of this class?**

*The physical environment is a large space with two grouping of tables. Students are able to select where they want to sit during the class and many times stay within the same area all semester. The room is equipped with computers for student use, a projector and two screens, VCR and DVD play, and a document camera.*

- **How does the physical or virtual environment affect the teaching/learning transaction in this class?**

*The room is quite large for the small group of students present; at times it is easy for students to become disengaged within the learning experience. The technology available does present options of student engagement.*

- **What are the strengths and weaknesses of this environment for teaching and learning?**

*The large room with a small class presents some challenges, but the large space is also conducive to successful small group work that is uninterrupted by noise of other groups. Technology available is a positive aspect to support learning opportunities of students and enhance the teaching strategies that can be incorporated into the course design.*

- **How does the time of day (or the asynchronous nature of an online class) impact the teaching/learning transaction?**

*Sandy incorporated active learning strategies to ensure students were able to stay engaged during the late class session. At times, Sandy was losing the students as they*

*were becoming tired; giving them a question to consider a chance to add to their web may have kept them more engaged.*

- **How are technologies being used to further the aims of this class?**

*Sandy utilized the projector to present a visual support to her lecture.*

### ***Teacher***

- **How was the person's educational philosophy, theories or beliefs exhibited in this session?**

*Sandy demonstrated through her presentation organization that she understands the diverse needs of adult learners, but including a relevant focus in her presentation and incorporating different teaching strategies during her lesson.*

### ***Content***

- Does the teaching reflected on the place of this course within the curriculum of her/his program and the traditions of her/his field discussed previously?

*Yes, Sandy focused her presentation topic inline with the focus of the course and the curriculum set by the program.*

### ***Style***

- **How does the teacher actively promote a positive emotional climate in the class?**

*Sandy did a great job connecting with the students right from the start. She presented herself and the information she covered in a manner that engaged the students and built a connection between her expertise and the interest of the students. Establishing a relationship so quickly is not an easy task, however, Sandy had considered what she needed to do to connect with her audience.*

- **How does the teacher exhibit passion for the teaching/learning process?**

*Sandy was well prepared for her presentation and demonstrated confidence and a belief of what she was sharing with students. I believe this contributed to the students taking interest in the topic and finding benefit in the information Sandy was presenting.*

- **Do students feel safe (physiologically and psychologically) in the class?**

*Yes, students were engaged and asking questions.*

### ***Assessment***

- **Is the content explored during this session connected to the course assessment?**

*Yes, Sandy took the current structure of the course and incorporated into the presentation.*

- **Is there a connection between the content explored in this session to the overall goals and objectives of the course?**

*The content that Sandy presented relates to what students are expected to do over the next two weeks. Sandy focused on elements within the topic that are essential for the students to understand to be successful within upcoming evaluation procedures, as well as what the program has identified as essential for students to know.*

### ***Learners***

- **What learning styles are represented among these learners?**

*The class is comprised of a mix of students; students that have had experience in the field and students new to the field. The experiences of students have the largest implication for instructors as they consider how to make learning experiences successful. Sandy needed to create a balance in which students with experience found benefit in the information covered, but not redundant. Students new to the field would need exposure to the basics*

*of the topic. Sandy did a nice job of creating a balanced presentation that students found beneficial.*

- **What are student expectations, motivations, and attitudes toward this class?**

*Students have mixed feelings about the course depending on the topic covered. Since many of the students had exposure to the topics before participating in the class, some of the students entered the learning situation with predetermined assumptions. As the topics are discussed, students realize that there is more to what they thought they understood related to the topics covered. Students then move into a naturally reflection process in which they try to link what they know and what they have just learned and what the relationship means to them.*

- **What developmental characteristics of adult learning are represented in these students?**

*The students really benefit from presentations that focus on relevancy to their currently professional life, as well as information presented in a practical focus. Sandy was able to incorporate both elements of adult learners into her presentation by connecting best practice to the reality of the field.*

- **How is the person taking the learners into account in the class?**

*Sandy talked with me before her presentation to gain background information about the students. She considered what is known about adult learners and what I had shared with her to create a learning experience that reflected what the students needed to understand the topic covered.*

## **Follow-up and Assessment**

### ***Overall Approach to Teaching***

- **Was the teacher's philosophy and approach to teaching reflected in their practice**

**and interactions with students on that day?**

*Yes, Sandy did a great job interacting with a group of students that she was not familiar with. She was responsive to their questions and comments and took the time to really consider their perspective.*

**• Did the teaching aim at attaining the results found in the goals, objectives, and assessments?**

*Sandy focused her presentation on the information that students needed to meet the goals of the course and program.*

**• Did the teacher's interactions with students reflect the teacher's attitudes and beliefs about teaching?**

*Sandy demonstrated respect for students during the presentation and her one-on-one interactions. Sandy would interrupt her presentation to check in with students to make sure they were following along with her. She would also answer their questions when they were posed rather than making the students wait until the end of the presentation. When Sandy answered the students' questions, she paused a second to show that she valued what the students were saying rather than quickly answering portraying an expert model.*

***Instructional Strategy (Modes)***

**• Did the teacher feel this mode was successful approach during this session?**

**Sandy felt the sessions were successful, and I would agree.**

*The students showed her through the activities and discussions that they understood the material and were able to come up with relevant examples that were applicable to their professional lives.*

**• What, if anything, would he/she have done differently?**

*Sandy said she would have expanded the webbing activity. She felt the group did not have enough time to stop and let the students add to their webs, but perhaps in the future, rather than providing them with handouts of the Power Point, they could have been required to take their notes on the web instead. If there was more time, she could have had the students get up and collaboratively create the web on the board. She believes the activity could have been a powerful way to represent the information, but instead it served only the purpose of breaking up the lecture and perhaps reinforcing a few of the points that were already presented.*

### ***Environment***

- **How did the teacher feel the physical or virtual environment affect the teaching/learning transaction in this class?**

*The late hour of the class makes it important to keep students actively engaged*

*The technology supported the lesson*

### ***Teacher***

- **How did the teacher feel his/her educational philosophy, theories or beliefs exhibited in this session?**

*She believes she supported the needs of diverse adult learners by using a variety of methods for instruction, keeping the students actively engaged*

*She used an informal and respectful style to create a safe environment for questions, comments, and ideas. She supported the learners by allowing them to develop their ideas about the topic rather than giving them all the information so they could be active partners in the learning process*

### ***Content***

- **How did the teacher feel this session was a reflection of this course within the curriculum of her/his program and the traditions of her/his field?**

*The content shared in this session was a reflection of current research as best practice in early childhood education. Kent State promotes the use of evidence based practices*

### *Style*

- **Did the teacher believe the students felt safe (physiologically and psychologically) in the class?**

*The students were comfortable sharing their questions and comments and Sandy made an effort to provide positive reinforcement when they shared.*

### *Assessment*

- **Are the assessments of students' knowledge and skills directly tied to goals or objectives?**

*Yes, the assessment procedures were tied to the session objectives.*

- **What types of assessment are used?**

*Observation during small group activities and through students' questions.*

- **How are assessment results used?**

*Sandy adjusted her presentation to ensure students were clear about the topic.*

- **How is the assessment tied to the overall goals of a program or accrediting body?**

*The assessments used during the presentation allowed Sandy to ensure students were meeting the objectives of the course.*

### *Learners*

- **Did the teacher believe that all learning styles were addressed in this session?**

*The information was presented in verbal, visual, and tangible means. The activities were diverse and used individual, small group, and whole group instruction.*

- **Did the teacher believe that the students were engaged in the learning process?**

**Why or Why not?**

*Students were engaged in the learning process during the presentations. While tired minds account for drifting during lecture, the activities kept the students actively involved with the material*