

# Mechanics VCP Session 1 (April 4, 2013)

## Breakout Session Notes

### Breakout Session 1: What do you do to promote a positive course climate?

#### Group 1

- Scott: Encouraging, remind students of success just to get to this point.
- Ken: Use students names, tell anecdotes about the work atmosphere referring to the bosses in the story as "she" and "her" w/o explanation.
- Ed: Statics tends to be their first engineering class. Works problems, pauses for student input (by name). Mechanics is their 2nd course of this type, and he emphasizes they got to the 2nd by being successful in the 1st.
- Amelito: Is encouraging, almost a bit of a cheerleader to encourage them. Includes stories about former students and their successes. Reminds them of resources available. Invites former students back for a visit.
- go over syllabus
- Math background
- about 10 minutes on a syllabus
- about 30 minutes on the material from prerequisites
- questionnaire / groups / work together

#### Group 2

- Himangshu: Large class ~ 90 students; Different majors/background; Real-world examples and relate to course-content
- Matt: I want you to get good grades, Will help you as much if you are willing to put in the time/effort.
- Pedor: Very simple/natural examples, Avoids negative words, Creates ease with material, More eye-contact.
- Anna: Introduce myself well - makes things less intimidating, "this is who I am", makes students comfortable.
- Steve: Students are not competing against each other, Tells that I want them to work together.
- discuss how what we do in Dynamics is different
- Barbara- tried different activities, fell back to syllabus and course material
- show applications

#### Group 3

- Learn students names, put names to faces (20-40 students)
- Use index cards to randomly call on students (eliminates favorites, helps to learn names)...do for the first couple weeks
- Take attendance for first couple lectures
- call on students many times per class (~10 times)
- For large classes, tougher to learn names

- Group work (help students meet each other as they don't necessarily socialize with their peers)
- Use competitions/projects to make material feel more real
- Tough to ask them to read material beforehand, possibly use online quizzes to help motivate
- Ask questions in class pertaining to the reading (anything unclear?)

#### *Group 4*

- Ask questions to students in order to engage them
- Wrong answers are ok, no expectations at startup
- Friendly discussions about their worries
- Encourage them to come to office hours on a regular basis
- know their names, it's hard when you have 105 students! I try!
- recitations of 30 students, 2 TAs
- other thing - give them opportunity to ask questions anonymously
- yes, "muddy cards" ? can be technical or about anything. They like to ask about my work experience.
- not during class.
- Encourage Student participation in the class

#### **Breakout Session 2: What do you do on the first day of class?**

- Scott: syllabus, expectations, course content
- Ken: syllabus, expectations, course management system, course content
- Carisa: syllabus, no ice breaker (large class), syllabus, course content (units, review, etc.)
- Sarah: I teach in a flipped classroom - so we work in groups of three during the class-time. Students work with the same two other students for several weeks, and manage to feel very comfortable in those smaller group settings. It seems very effective for creating a friendly and supportive/collegial environment.
- Jon: Learns all students by having them introduce themselves and tell an interesting fact
- Carisa: Has a large course (200-300 students per semester) and tries to meet with each discussion section during the first week to encourage a more personal interaction
- Mousa: Stays positive by encouraging questions and answers them in a positive manner even if the question is about something that was just discussed.

