



SI-4 Success Ideas from Places You Might Not Think to Look

With complex systems, it's difficult if not impossible to formulate clear, reliable cause-and-effect relationships, and teaching is a good example of a complex system.

Faculty today need to know more about how to cope successfully with complexity by learning how to be more open to experience, observation, and innovative thinking. And they should rely less on rigid instructional techniques of a past era.

Improvement Strategies for Working in Complex Systems

One of the goals of TFS is to provide improvement ideas and concepts designed to help instructors work effectively in a complex system, which is their class. Thus, TFS can improve the probability a teacher will achieve the teaching outcomes they desire.

A primary tool and one that is unique to TFS is the Critical Success Factor, six-part, teaching-improvement framework. Our Critical Success Factor structure offers a way to better understand the breadth and depth of concepts and areas of expertise required for meaningful teaching improvement.

Familiarity with CSFs thinking can empower faculty to work more effectively, even in the complex teaching and learning environments they face every day.

TFS e-Mentor Success Insights

Context Sensitive Instruction--An Example of Using TFS CSF Thinking

One of the six Critical Success Factors of teaching improvement is Context Analysis. Let's take a very brief look at Context Analysis. By this we mean using "field analytics," which is like choosing a wide-angle lens to view completely and better understand the instructional process.

Mindfulness

At TFS, our bias is to urge instructors to develop what might be called teaching mindfulness that includes real-time knowledge of how their students are responding to the learning process, their level of learning-outcome synchronicity and acceptance, and a sense of how learners are interacting with their peers and the body of knowledge being studied.

Finally, effective teachers seem to investigate continually how well students are retaining the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they are learning.

Context Analysis also is involved when an instructor develops the skill to know what he or she is experiencing while teaching. Self-realizations such as Am I teaching effectively today, or as an athlete might describe as being "in the zone," or not? Emotional-state awareness helps the instructor become aware of what emotions are surfacing while teaching. For example, an instructor may experience fear, anxiety, frustration, anger, elation, confidence, satisfaction, and joy and sometimes a combination of these at the same time.

Overall, instructors need to closely monitor their energy level and the energy levels of their students. When they teach with awareness of the complex energy dynamics at work that creates the teaching/learning context against which learning is taking place, instructors tend to be much more responsive, therefore, effective.

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When instructors become aware of engaging in real-time Context Analysis while they teach, they can make needed changes on the fly. Once experienced, the benefits of teaching with Context Analysis tools at hand becomes crystal clear. Looking for ideas in hidden corners can make a difference..

*~John H, (Jack) Shrawder, Exec. Director
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