

## **Sara Weisenbeck**

### Faculty Teaching Certificate Program I Capstone Project

This year in the Faculty Teaching Certificate Program I, we have focused on many ways to improve our teaching. One area that I am working to improve is to incorporate as many active learning strategies into my curriculum as possible. Since I teach speech communication, I feel I have an advantage as it is fun and easy to have an “active” communication class.

One aspect of my course that I struggled with last semester was the group project, therefore for this capstone project, I chose to create a new group project for my student which ultimately focused on many active learning opportunities. The project is centered on intercultural communication.

Previous group project:

- Student had too many and too vague topic ideas to chose.
- Students struggled to connect course concepts and theories to the real-world experience or topic.
- Students lacked small group communication skills.

Revised group project: (See attached sheet for details of assignment)

- Students were all given the same option for the project – to connect and interact with an international or multicultural student.
- Before the group project was assigned, class lectures and activities focused on intercultural communication and small group communication to prepare students for the project.
- Final group presentations were reflective of the entire group process, demonstrating knowledge and interest in a new culture and ability to effectively communicate in a small group.

Specific active learning strategies:

- Small group problem solving activity in class
- Students put into groups to complete intercultural communication assignment
- Groups independently contacting international or multicultural student to learn about his/her culture and communication
- Students reporting progress on projects to class on a regular basis through pair shares, reflective writings, and large group discussions
- Final group presentations linking communication skills and creativity

Thus far I have been very pleased with the results of this project as students are clearly exhibiting their knowledge of new culture and the small group communication process. I plan to teach this project again next year. This is an excellent example of how active teaching strategies help students achieve course objectives instead of traditional methods.

