

Enhancing  
Vitality and  
Teaching  
Effectiveness  
through  
Reflective Teaching  
Communities



# Presented by



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# Introduction

The Reflective Teaching Community (RTC) program was developed as an interdisciplinary community of practice model that integrates reflective pedagogy with strategies designed to improve teaching effectiveness, foster community, and enhance faculty vitality across all career stages

In this session, we will

- explain how we structured the RTC program
- participate in a reflective teaching activity
- discuss the data on the program's effectiveness in achieving its goals
- engage in conversation about what development opportunities can further support faculty in teaching effectiveness, community-building, and enhancing vitality.



# Context

## Gonzaga University

- Located in Spokane, WA
- Private institution rooted in the **Jesuit**, Catholic, and humanistic tradition
- Total enrollment of 7,306 (5,156 undergraduates)
- Average Class Size: 18
- Student/Faculty Ratio: 12 to 1
- Full-time Faculty Members: 464





# Reflective Teaching

**Guiding Question:** *How can we refine our teaching to better support student engagement, learning, and development?*

An effective teacher:

**4.1 Scholarly Approach:** Applies a scholarly approach to teaching by actively investigating and implementing teaching improvements to enhance student learning.

**4.2 Professional Development:** Pursues ongoing education to enhance subject matter expertise and pedagogical knowledge.

**4.3 Reflective Practice:** Engages in self and collaborative reflection opportunities to analyze feedback and promote continuous improvement in teaching





# Program Goals

**Effective Teaching Practices:** Enhance faculty knowledge and application of teaching practices that align with our institutional teaching priorities and positively impact student learning and development.

**Collaboration:** Cultivate a collaborative and supportive environment that encourages faculty to engage in critical and reflective dialogue, incorporating feedback to challenge, support, and enrich each other's teaching practices.

**Reflective Teaching:** Strengthen reflective teaching capabilities, enabling faculty to refine their teaching practices and adapt effectively to evolving student needs.

**Faculty Vitality:** Encourage implementing sustainable teaching practices that support and enhance faculty well-being and enthusiasm.



# Evidence-Based

The RTC program, including its structure, content, and feedback tools, was developed using evidence from various research studies. Our annotated bibliography outlines the primary sources used and their application.

## Key References:

- Brickman, P., Gormally, C., & Martella, A. M. (2016). Making the grade: Using instructional feedback and evaluation to inspire evidence-based teaching. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*.
- Boerboom, T. B. B., Jaarsma, D., Dolmans, D. H. J. M., Scherpbier, A. J. J. A., Mastenbroek, N. J. J. M., & Van Beukelen, P. (2011). Peer group reflection helps clinical teachers to critically reflect on their teaching. *Medical Teacher*.
- Owen, S. (2016). Professional learning communities: Building skills, reinvigorating the passion, and nurturing teacher wellbeing and “flourishing” within significantly innovative schooling contexts. *Educational Review*.
- Wininger, S. R., & Birkholz, P. M. (2013). Sources of instructional feedback, job satisfaction, and basic psychological needs. *Innovative Higher Education*.



# Program Structure

Faculty signed up for their RTC community preference:

- Undergraduate Interdisciplinary
- Core/Gen Ed: Must be teaching a class in the Core
- First Year Seminar or Core Integration Seminar courses
- Graduate Interdisciplinary

They indicated their preferred day and time for meetings.

Eight total synchronous meetings throughout the semester.

- One two-hour pre-semester meeting
- Six one-hour meetings during the semester (about 2 a month)
- One two-hour post-semester meeting

Information for each session was posted on a Canvas site.  
Reflection prompts were emailed to participants several days before each meeting.





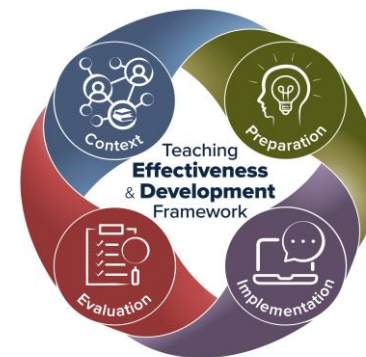
# Typical 1-Hour Session Agenda

Time Frame	Activity
5 minutes	Welcome and Greetings: Get situated
5 minutes	Personal Reflection on the Topic: Engage in reflection using questions on the previous session's topic.
10-15 minutes	Collaborative Reflection: Group discussion based on reflection questions and the topic, facilitated with semi-structured questions.
20-25 minutes	Content—Focus on the Topic: Present the main topic of the session, with a focus on one of the domains of the Teaching Effectiveness & Development Framework.
5-10 minutes	Collaborative Reflection: Discuss future applications and intentions and conclude the session.
5-10 minutes	Closure and next steps



# Session Topics:

- Sessions 1 & 2: Learning Experience Design
- Session 3: Mission-Aligned Learning Culture
- Session 4: Feedback Tools (Mid-semester feedback surveys and Peer Observation of Teaching)
- Session 5: Discussing Mid-semester feedback
- Session 6: Scholarly Teaching Practices
- Session 7: Self-Assessment
- Session 8: Personal Learning Question Collaborative Discussion and Student Feedback Analysis Guide





# Program Budget

Expense	Cost
Journals and Bookmarks	\$50
Snacks	\$250
Lunch for Final Meeting for 25 participants	\$300
Stipends for Participating in Feedback Tools Study (Part of IRB Approval Process for participation: \$200 for 24 participants)	\$4800
Total	\$5400

# Turn and Talk (3-minutes)

1. Stand-up
2. Introduce yourself (Name, organization, position/role)
3. Share what programs or support are available at your institution for:
  - continuous improvement in teaching
  - enhancing vitality
  - collaboration with faculty on teaching ideas

# Mini RTC Workshop

Juliane Mora

# Faculty Vitality Reflection



**Burnout** is a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.

**Vitality** is a state resulting from effective workplace stress management.



Elements of Burnout	Elements of Vitality
Struggling to find motivation	Finding joy and purpose in teaching
Feeling consistently exhausted	Experiencing sustained energy and drive
Difficulty in generating fresh ideas	Innovating and generating new ideas
Becoming indifferent or less inquisitive	Demonstrating ongoing curiosity
Tending towards a negative outlook	Maintaining a positive, hopeful attitude
Struggling to rebound from setbacks	Displaying resilience and perseverance
Reluctance to venture beyond comfort zones	Actively seeking out new challenges
Feeling overwhelmed by change	Willingness to explore and take risks
Tendency to work more in isolation	Actively seeking personal growth

# Examen:

A practice that invites people to mindfully reflect on the experiences of everyday life, to notice thoughts, feelings, patterns, and to move toward aligning one's life with one's values, or what one holds sacred.

Listening to your experience (to inform reflective teaching)

- What elements of my teaching are life-giving to me?
- What elements of my teaching drain me?

# Discernment:

**Awareness:** Take 3 deep breaths, centering yourself in this time and space

**Gratitude:** Reflect on your teaching with gratitude. Ask yourself, "For what in my teaching am I grateful?"

**Review:** Reflect on your recent experiences teaching; recall moments big and small, high and low, energizing and depleting; notice the thoughts and feelings that arise.

**Focus:** Choose one aspect of your teaching that was life giving and one where you felt challenged (or were not your best self). Spend some time with these moments without judgment.

**Action:** Conclude by asking yourself, "What will I do in light of this? What support do I need?" (Consider changes that enhance vitality and address burnout)

# Action:

1-minute silent reflection  
2-minutes share with your partner

Thoughts? Feelings? Reactions?

Desires? Goals?

# What did participants say about the RTC program?

Kristin Finch

IRB Protocol number 2404BARCTA for study titled "The Impact of Reflective Teaching Communities on Teaching Vitality and Effectiveness"

# Participant Demographics

## 24 participants across a variety of disciplines



### Engineering:

Civil Engineering  
Computer Science



### Business:

Business Economics



### Health Sciences:

Human Physiology



### Graduate Education:

Doctoral in Leadership studies



### Arts & Sciences:

Communication Studies  
English  
Modern Languages & Literature  
Religion  
Philosophy  
Classical Civilizations  
International Studies  
Political Science  
Environmental Studies  
Physics  
Mathematics



## Years of Teaching in Higher Education



0 - 3 years

4 - 7 years

8 - 11 years

12 or more years

- Of the 24 participants in the RTC, 22 completed the assessment
- Assessment was disseminated upon the conclusion of the RTC program (at the end of the semester) via Qualtrics with 2 targeted reminders



# Assessment: Teaching Effectiveness

**95%**  
(21 of 22)

This program has enhanced my understanding of teaching effectiveness.

**100%**  
(22 of 22)

I am motivated to try something new in my teaching because of this program.

**100%**  
(22 of 22)

I have acquired new knowledge and skills from this program that will likely improve my teaching effectiveness.

**82%**  
(18 of 22)

This program has increased my eagerness to collaborate with peers on teaching ideas.

# What Participants Said About: Teaching Effectiveness

"The most valuable aspect was **the new lens it afforded me to pursue an effective pedagogical practice** in my community of learners/teachers. ... **Feedback and peer collaboration were crucial.** The peer observation and pre- and post-constructive debriefing **gave me diverse perspective of my teaching method and procedures.**"

"**Self-reflection in a community that explicitly values teaching and being innovative** and evidence-based in teaching practices."

"I tried the 'structured feedback' during midterm. ... The questions allow for **students to give actionable feedback** in a way that allows for the instructor to make small changes for the rest of the semester."

"My **thinking about student course evaluations has shifted** a lot. I am having **multiple conversations about evaluation vs feedback**, which has been influenced from this reflective teaching community."

# Assessment: Teaching Vitality

**95%**  
(21 of 22)

This program has increased my awareness of factors that influence teaching vitality.

**82%**  
(18 of 22)

Engaging in discussions with colleagues through this program has improved my ability to manage factors that influence my teaching vitality.

# What Participants Said About: Teaching Vitality

"Participation in RTC allowed me to **make time for real reflection on what was feeding/fueling my teaching and what was draining/depleting me** in my teaching practices."

"I felt **less isolated** and a **clearer sense of community**."

"Journaling has forced me to be **aware of my own vitality and mental health**."

"The community and the space to **talk through frustrations and challenges** in a space where the participants were **all invested in our growth and vitality**."

# Assessment:

## Student Feedback Reflective Practice Process

**100%**  
(20 of 20;  
2 NA)

The final peer group reflection session enhanced my understanding of how to use feedback to enhance my teaching effectiveness.

**100%**  
(20 of 20;  
2 NA)

The structure of the final peer group reflection session prompted open and constructive dialogue.

# What Participants Said About: Student Feedback Reflective Practice Process

**Question: How (if at all) did the Student Feedback Reflective Practice Process help you understand your teaching effectiveness?**

"The guide for **HOW to read the student feedback was the absolute best thing you could have given me**. It helped me shape and think about the feedback **beyond simply having an emotional response to it**. After thinking about the response rate and the types of comments (non-specific positive, etc.), I was much **more comfortable looking for the actionable student comments**."

"It gave me a **process and protocol to more objectively self-reflect** (which I often do, but not as structured), **BEFORE** reading student feedback. I was **surprised how similar my responses were to themes of the students**. This helped me let go of some of the outlier responses in the SRI's- that were not helpful and **helped me develop an action plan on what to prioritize changing** for next Spring when I teach this course."



# Questions



# Juliane's Testimonial



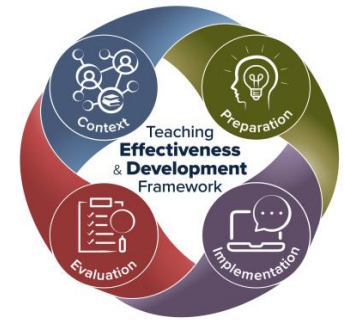
Engaged with the  
process as a learner...



Even though I knew what we were  
asking and expecting to find...

# Next Steps

- Reflective Teaching Community program refined with a narrower scope
- Faculty development courses on different components of the Teaching Effectiveness & Development Framework
- Standardized guide and training for Peer Observations of Teaching
- Report on using student feedback in Rank, Promotion, and Tenure evaluation process
- Share out Reviewing Student Feedback Responses Guide



# Connect with us:

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