

CST 390 Podcast

Podcast Season Theme: "Recovering our interpersonal skills after COVID"

Justin Wilson and Dianna Mock

Podcast Title: " Class Discussion Strategies"

Tipsheet: " Class Discussion Strategies"

1. Introduction (~40 seconds)

Intro:

Justin: Hey everybody, Im Justin Wilson

Dianna: And I'm Dianna Mock!

Justin: Thanks for listening in everyone, today we are going to touch on a subject that I believe is very fitting due to the nature of the world right now... what I mean is we are obviously still in a pandemic!

Dianna: Yes, we are, and because of that, things that we were accustomed to before, have shifted dramatically over the past year. Some of the major changes have been very obvious, like changes in work life, and our environment at school has also changed. It seems like just as I was getting used to learning in a virtual environment, it was time to get back in person!

Justin: Absolutely, and while some of the more visible changes have taken place, there are lots of things that we haven't given thought. So Dianna, I would like to give you the honor of introducing our glorious topic for today's episode and then we can dive right in!

STOP!

2. Body* (3-4 minutes)

1.

Dianna: Thank you so much Justin, our topic for today's episode is "Class discussion strategies". Class discussions are an unavoidable part of all of our college careers and when done right, they can be a platform for critical

thinking and problem solving amongst peers. Today Justin and I are going to share some strategies on what we can do before, during and after class discussions to enhance our experience with delivering our perspective and receiving the perspective of others.

So let's start by talking about strategies to take before starting class discussions.

Dianna: First, it is key to actually do the assigned readings. Being able to apply key concepts while reading will help you gain a deeper understanding of the material. Make sure that you understand key concepts and if you are not clear on something, note what you don't understand and bring that to the discussion for clarification. Look at your misunderstandings as a way to learn from your classmates.

Also before the discussion, you need to prepare yourself for how you will respond if/ and when you disagree with a classmate's point of view. Practice framing your disagreement in a positive and constructive way that promotes further exploration of the topic.

Now Justin, what are some strategies we can take during our class discussions to make our role more effective?

During discussion

Justin: Those are awesome points you made Dianna, the preparation before class is just as important as during. As a matter of fact there are so many ways to help you navigate discussions during class time. One of the main ways is to be engaged and pay attention to those around you. Being engaged is a multistep process, that process includes things like: Being a good listener, paying attention to non verbal behaviors, thinking with those around you, remember, you can't just speak at them, and also remembering that less is more. Another way to tackle discussions during class is knowing how to set yourself up for a successful discussion. If you attract success then success will find you. You can do this by placing yourself in the classroom selectively. If you sit closer to the professor, it will be much easier to get their attention and ask questions! So Dianna, we've gone over the before

and the during of how to navigate a classroom discussion, is there anything else we can add?

After discussion

Dianna: Great points Justin, thank you. So class is over, the discussion is over, your job is done right? Not quite, this is when it is important that we reflect on the class discussion and take the time to write down a couple of main themes from the discussion. You can even practice speaking out loud about these ideas as this is a great way to engage in active learning. Also, take this time post-discussion to think about what worked well for you and what didn't, and take these lessons and apply them to preparing for, participating in, and reflecting on your next class discussion.

STOP!

2.

Dianna: Our podcast theme for this season is "recovering our interpersonal skills after COVID" and as Justin mentioned earlier navigating discussions during class time is seemingly new to us all over again.

Justin, have you encountered any difficulties with class discussions since getting back on campus and attending class in person?

Justin: YES!!! I've encountered problems from myself, but I've also noticed some difficulties with the students around me. Since the pandemic hit, and we are now back in the classroom, it feels as if no one wants to speak up or speak out. Students, including myself at times simply aren't engaged with group and class discussion as they were pre Covid. It's very very strange, I am not accustomed to a quiet classroom. The UNCG speaking center tip sheet as mentioned before talks a lot about preparation. I think this is true, the times where I haven't read the material or been prepared, are often times when I don't feel inclined to participate in class discussions. You can fix this buy... "drum roll please..." Reading the material!!!! Yes, it's that simple at times. Reading and taking key components from what you read can lead to possible questions that you feel comfortable to ask. Being prepared by reading the material, gathering questions and taking key components from the reading a great way to refire those interpersonal skills after being locked away from covid

How about you Dianna, have you had any recent experiences with class discussions where you felt like your interpersonal skills were challenged and how did you overcome this?

Dianna:

- I definitely have. Even in my American Sign Language class, I have noticed that during class discussions I am having trouble remaining engaged. During the pandemic, being engaged involved looking at your computer monitor and being back in class and face to face with our peers, I can definitely tell that my interpersonal skills are not where they used to be.

- One tip that is provided by UNCG's speaking center is to be a good listener. We must consider that unless it is obvious to your classmates it may be a road block in the productivity of the conversation. Since we are all out of practice, it is important to consciously tailor your comments to what your classmates are saying so they are aware of your interest and are willing to contribute to the discussion. Paying attention to nonverbal behaviors, both yours and those of others can help you show engagement and feel as if others are as well, something as simple as nodding your head to show your classmates you are listening or keeping an upright posture can also show you are engaged.

3. Transitioning (~30 seconds total)

Dianna: Taking the time to prepare for class discussions is beneficial for you yourself but also for everyone involved. Discussion-based approaches to learning offer a unique platform where students can mutually share thoughts and ideas and when we as students prepare effectively and participate actively these discussions can be meaningful and promote growth and learning that can not be achieved alone.

STOP

4. Outro (~20 seconds)

Justin: I couldn't have said it better myself Dianna! Being a good listener is awesome to help students get acclimated again to the classroom, but it also

helps to sharpen your overall interpersonal communications skills. Speaking of good listening, me & Dianna want to thank you for being great listeners today during this podcast!

Dianna: Thank you Justin, this is an important topic and it's very useful to all of us that are trying to get back into the rhythm of school. We want to thank you again for listening in, once again my name is Dianna Mock!...

Justin: And I'm Justin Wilson!

Dianna: We hope you enjoyed, have a great day everyone :)