Michelle Pacansky-Brock Delivers ETE Seminar and Podcast at USU

Center for Innovative Design & Instruction

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The seminar focused on digital tools in higher education and the podcast discussed motivating online students.
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Dr. Michelle Pacansky-Brock, a faculty mentor for Digital Innovation with the California Community College system, visited Utah State University (USU) to offer her expertise on higher education in the digital realm. Dr. Pacansky-Brock’s work has helped online instructors across the nation and beyond understand how to craft relevant, humanized online learning experiences that support the diverse needs of college students. She is the author of “Best Practices for Teaching with Emerging Technologies” (2nd edition, Routledge), and has held leadership roles with the Online Learning Consortium and EDUCASE Learning Initiative.

On Thursday, October 3, Dr. Pacansky-Brock held an Empowering Teaching Excellence (ETE) seminar titled, “Humanizing Learning with Digital Tools.” The seminar focused on innovative ways to connect to students digitally to increase their ability of being successful.

Diverse student populations require learning environments that provide options and use digital tools to mindfully cultivate a sense of belonging for students.

According to Dr. Pacansky-Brock, developing stronger connections to students helps us to “see our students as real humans, who have real lives, thoughts, and feelings.” She explained that creating a social presence in online learning environments increases student satisfaction, interaction and depth of learning. Free tools are available to enable these types of interactions. For example, Adobe Spark Video is an easy and usable tool to create video content as a way to share stories and reflect on learning.

“As colleges and universities move towards serving broader student populations, our teaching and learning environments must change to support their success,” said Dr. Pacansky-Brock. “Diverse student populations require learning environments that provide options and use digital tools to mindfully cultivate a sense of belonging for students. Believe it or not – technology can inspire greater connections between you and your students.”

While at USU, Dr. Pacansky-Brock sat down with Travis Thurston, senior instructional designer in the Center for Innovative Design & Instruction (CIDI), and Erin Wadsworth-Anderson, instructional designer for CIDI, to create a podcast titled, “Motivating Online Students.”

You can view the ETE Seminar and podcast at the USU Empower Teaching YouTube channel.

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