Three Keys to Effective Teaching

Do you ever step away from getting ready for the next class to think about what makes us good at our profession? Have you developed your own list of the most important things we need to do to maximize learning? Would you like to? Would you like to share your sense of what approaches are essential with some colleagues? Would you like to hear their ideas?

If the answer is yes, the LES Team (Warren Bostrom, Claire Haeg, Bob Hesse, Ken Jones, Michelle Li-Kuehne, Barb May, and Rodger Narloch) invites you to join the conversation on Wednesday, August 28 at 4:30 in Gorecki 204C. We promise refreshments and an opportunity to meet new people, and we expect that you will be immersed in a lively and beneficial conversation.

Delayed to 9/3/13

Ask people to write down their ideas; then pick what they see as the most critical three.

Discrete entries – no combining

Find people to talk with – 3-4 in groups.

Opportunity to meet new people, pick up new ideas

Preferably not someone from your department!!

In small groups –

Everyone gets to share his/her list. Works best if everyone gets to speak before the full conversation begins. That way people can focus on what they are hearing rather than on how they want to respond.

Each small group talks through all of the entries.

Decide what three you – collectively – see as most important.

Try for consensus.

Report out.

Ask for explanation-expansion where necessary.

Then yours

And pass out handout.

My three.

#1 Know your audience

What is their experience with the discipline?

What do they know

More importantly – what interpretive framework do they bring and how might that affect their ability to see what you want them to see

Lots of stories about intuitive frameworks that block real learning in science –

Some people doing pre-tests to get handle

My discipline -- – Lendol Calder –

Study of how his intro students think about history

“What would you tell foreigner who asked for history of US”

In 1990s vast majority had narrative – freedom quest or glory story

2012 – only 14% tell Glory story

Most of rest don’t have a narrative – their vision is simply a collection of facts. No theme, no connection.

History truly meaningless to them – collection of data points that aren’t connected and signify nothing.

My experience

History as facts; AND historical accounts faithful recitations of what happened – no sense of argument or alternative interpretation

Point is to figure where your audience is – what are barriers to learning what you want them to know.

Really hard to climb over the barriers if you don’t know they are there or aren’t willing to acknowledge that you need to deal with them

Can’t assume they think like younger versions of us.

#2 Show them you care

About the subject, about working with them, about helping them grow.

Enthusiasm/passion in classroom

Explain why you are asking them to do certain things – how they will help them get better at x; link to learning things they care about

Supportive comments/encouragement

Prompt and focused feedback

Can’t grow if we don’t do it when they may be open

Can’t grow if overwhelming or non-existent

#3 Goal is to create independent learners

(It isn’t the content – they are going to forgot most of the specifics, and if they need them, they will look them up.)

Help them learn how to do it themselves –

Don’t tell them things they can get on own

Help them stretch to new levels

Independent work, then key questions to push to next level

Hold them accountable – as adults

Expect them to do it – not a “gottcha” approach

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Zelda Gamson and Arthur Chickering, “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” <http://wwwtemp.lonestar.edu/multimedia/SevenPrinciples.pdf>

National Education Association, “Higher Education Best Practices - Teaching & Learning”

<http://www.nea.org/home/33508.htm>

Tom Drummond, “Brief Summary of Best Practices in College Education”

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