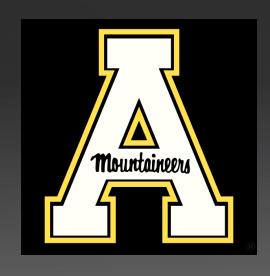
Student (Dis)Engagement

Laurie A. Ramirez AMLE 2011 – Louisville, KY 11/11/11



"Anyone?"



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxP
VyieptwA&feature=player_detailpage

Abstract

This study investigated the importance of online reflective journaling and shared student evaluation forms in an effort to foster discussion about student reactions to and feedback about curricular choices, instructional methods, and instructor responsiveness. This particular piece focuses primarily on student (dis)engagement with curriculum and instruction in newly developed diversity courses.

Initial Concerns

 Students - Discomfort, resistance, guilt, defensiveness, denial, anger

Novice professors – balancing the need to "shake things up" and simultaneously "work the system"

Participants

- Fall 2009 Spring 2011
 - > 3 graduate courses, 2 undergraduate courses
- Students in newly developed courses centered on diversity issues:
 - > Race
 - > Culture
 - > Language
 - > Class
 - > Gender
 - > GLTBQIA
 - > Whiteness

n = 88 98% White 66% Female 34% Male

Research Questions

- In what moments do students report they feel most ENGAGED with content, curriculum, and/or instruction?
- In what moments do students report they feel most DISENGAGED or DISTANCED from content, curriculum, and/or instruction?

Methods

- Self-study of teacher education practices (S-STEP)
 - Investigation of teaching practice with the aim of improvement
 - > Transparent practice shared with students
 - > Shared goals
 - > Collaborative reflection
 - > Utilizing student voices as data

Findings

- Engagement:
 - > Discussion (47%)
 - Large group discussion
 - Small group discussion
- Obis-engagment:
 - > Lecture
 - > Topics considered "taboo"

• Engagement:

- > Discussion:
 - "everyone had a voice"
 - "chance to share information in a nonthreatening environment"
 - "discussions made the class enjoyable"
 - "helped me learn additional techniques to be used in my classes"
 - "the constantly changing group dynamics helped me see other perspectives"

• Dis-engagement:

- > Lecture/Powerpoint: (7%)
 - "repeated info we already knew"
 - · "review"
- > Taboo topics:
 - "frustration with some of the naïve comments of others in the course"
 - "did not participate then complained about not learning anything"
 - "it still amazes me how many students do not seem to really care about their classes and learning new things"

Key Finding

• Students recognized that much of their discomfort and disengagement came from within themselves, noting that they sometimes prevented their own learning because of their fears and insecurities.

- In Fall 2010 50% of students commented that "my own bias" or "truth realized about myself" hindered their learning.
 - 'how far I am from where I want to be, but aware that I can change it"
 - becoming aware of and accepting my own views, even when my friends were completely against them"
 - "I was very surprised how much I learned about myself. These experiences taught me (among other things) that feeling acceptance is far from acting accepting."

- Summer 2010 A student summed it up very nicely:
 - "What is important now, the feeling that is most important for me to remember, is that a powerful feeling of 'being out of place' governed my inner self that day, and that the only person who made me feel that way was me. Real or not, if you feel 'out of place', you'll react as if you really are. On that day, I conferred minority status upon myself" (student reflection, Summer 2010, p. 5; emphasis in original).

Significance

- All teachers should engage in critical reflection, and perhaps in self-study, beginning with an examination of themselves
- Students are an integral part of the design and implementation of the course their feedback has the power to transform practice related to curriculum, instruction, assessment, etc.

Contact Information

• If you have questions or comments, I welcome you to contact me:

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