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Teaching Excellence @HCC

Increasing Student Engagement

Curriculum Revolution! by Mike Harsh

In the continuing search for effective methods to inspire my Humanities students to take an active role in their learning and in the class discussions, I frequently attempt to ask compelling questions that will get them involved in seeing the great issues of our culture as significant in their lives.

Recently, I have found that asking them about the knowledge that they would really like to have, things that they would really like to know, has been a good way

of discussing the idea of revolution and change in society. I think this works well because the students begin to question the content of their "world," the "required" courses they must take to fulfill degree requirements, and they realize that for the most part, those courses have nothing to do with what they are really interested in learning about their world. It only takes a short time until they begin to talk about how a revolutionary change in the college curriculum would be the only way to create the kind of course rele-

vancy they are seeking. They soon begin to ask why they can't begin to arrange for courses to be offered that would fulfill their needs, and an idea not unlike the "teach-ins" of the 1960's and 70's soon begins to emerge. It's then a relatively easy leap to connect their dissatisfaction and ideas to those of other people in other places and times who saw a need to radically transform their world in order to effect change.



While a true revolution hasn't happened yet, I anticipate that one class will soon storm the administration building and demand a more relevant curriculum. Then I will know that they have grasped the concept of revolution!

Maximizing Student Learning that Occurs During Anatomy & Physiology Lab by Terri Bidle

In the past, students would come unprepared to lab, many times not even knowing what lab was to be completed that week. They also would hurry to complete the lab in as little time as possible. Not surprisingly, they would then score low on the lab quiz the next week.

Two changes have increased student mastery. Students are now required to: (1) complete a pre-lab exercise before coming to lab, usually one-page of questions relating to the lab; and (2) participate in a "check-out" activity at the end of lab to demonstrate a certain level of comprehension and understanding. For example, for the

lab on the heart each student is required to trace blood through the heart with a large diagram that is hung from the front of the room. (An additional benefit of the "check out" exercise is that it forces students to learn proper pronunciation of specialized anatomical terminology.) It also provides feedback to the instructor regarding student understanding.

Although designed to help students in anatomy and physiology, assigning a pre-lecture assignment and a follow-up activity that requires that each student demonstrate mastery can be used in other disciplines as well.

Preparing Students to do Presentations by James Miller

Requiring students to present increasingly longer elements to class members seems to help alleviate some students' fear of giving more formal presentations. Early in the semester students are asked to present very simple answers to questions and to present very simple concepts from their seats. As the semester progresses, students provide longer answers, are asked to present in front of the class rather than from their seat, and are required to use props or the white board as part of these practice presentations.



Best Teaching Practice

by Margaret Spivey



Perhaps the best way I have found to connect the students to the subject matter is to build a project into the syllabus whereby students can apply their new skills. Currently, my database class is working on a project for the Hagerstown Rescue Mission. Creating a database that will actually be used justifies the labor of the project and allows the students to utilize their skills. A project also pushes the student to seek skills beyond the scope of the course.

Extemporaneous Presentation

by David Maruszewski



After doing projects or pieces of work, I'll have the students explain to the class what they did, and how they did it, in brief. I don't grade the presentation so they don't come with anything prepared. The presentations are a little less polished, but more questions tend to get asked than in formal presentations. Also, having smaller bites of information allows students to ask more particular questions (instead of having to understand the whole subject before asking a good question.) I usually bring them up to the front of the room to do this. I found that if they did this at their seats, they felt more like I was running the show, and hence it would become more of a "grilling" by me than a presentation.

Extra Helpful Blackboard Features

By Steve Shank



1 - Email from Blackboard

In each student's personal information record in blackboard there is a field titled "email address." The instructor and/or student has access to this field and can enter their preferred address (the default is a college assigned email address).

You can send to an entire class or select specific students through control panel - send email.

Choose Single / Select Users

Choose all or individual students

The instructor also receives copy.

Students go to their regular email to receive your email.

2 - Submitting assignments

Blackboard has a feature for submitting assignments that is even better than the digital dropbox.

First, make sure in Manage Tools, under Content Type Availability, that Assignment is selected. Then, de-

side/create which folder you want students to place the assignment into and hit Choose Assignment GO (upper right of screen in desired content area). Finally, Complete Assignment information (you may even attach an assignment file or simply enter instructions), then choose submit.

Student Submittal

To submit an assignment, the student navigates to the content area and selects View/Complete Assignment. Here, the student can enter comments and/or attach local file(s). (Student can only hit submit button one time)

Grading

Instructor navigates to grade book
An exclamation mark appears in grades that need to be checked
Select Click to see options then choose Grade Details, View Attempt
Under User's Work are comments and/or files. Enter grade, comments and attach any files.

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