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Critical pedagogy: Building strong learning communities

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Critical pedagogy: Building strong learning communities.

The practice and the need it addresses

Build community
Strengthens instructor-student relationship; peer interactions; connection to course content, and sense of belonging. Shifts normative power structures and empowers students to co-construct the learning experience. Student voice matters.

Think about your thinking
On-going opportunities to learn and practice higher order thinking (H.O.T.) increases awareness of cognition, connections with learning outcomes & real world application. Strengthening H.O.T. skills is key to success in college & life.

Collaborative learning
Strengthens self-efficacy, sense of belonging, community, group outcomes & cooperative student learning.

Shift to formative assessments
Learning becomes enjoyable. Students are highly engaged. Attendance increases. Promotes creativity and innovation, while continuously strengthening community.

Self-management & recognition
Strengthens community, increases sense of self-efficacy, and improves learning outcomes. Transferable to life skills.

Practice inquiry & connections
Differentiate Ella Baker and Jim Crow questions and offer opportunities to practice. Use graphic organizers and concept maps to help visualize connections and write academic papers.

Evidence this practice benefits UNLV Students

Build community
Students perform best within caring & supportive interpersonal relationships citing more positive dispositions to learning, increased satisfaction with school, and higher academic engagement (Klem & Connell, 2004; Kohl, 1998).

Think about your thinking
Classroom activities requiring higher order thinking that test students at the same cognitive level ensure high academic achievement and a deep conceptual understanding of skills/class content. (Crowe et al., 2008).

Collaborative learning
Employers hire based on soft skills of communication, teamwork, & critical thinking. Learning to work effectively in a group decreases anxiety & avoidance behaviors that contradict intended learning.

Shift to formative assessments
Students exposed to authentic tasks that are multidimensional, focus on growth & higher levels of cognitive thinking for meaningful learning (Montgomery, 2010).

Self-management & recognition
External barriers challenge student’s ability to focus on assignments & intake new information. Caring classrooms offer self-management tools & recognitions to increase student grit & growth (Gay, 2010).

Practice inquiry & connections
Increased exposure to organization, inquiry & developing questions strengthens critical thinking skills.

Resources and where to find them

Shift to formative assessments
Include formative assessments that require analysis, evaluation, and creation relevant to course content and learning outcomes. Use product cards to encourage creativity, and promote authentic assessments. Rubrics!

Self-management & recognition
Celebrate student resilience. Teach students to self-validate, encourage peers, and use a growth mindset. Offer informal awards ceremony; meaningful feedback; recognition cards/notes; end semester with a potluck 🍽️

Practice inquiry & connections
Encourage frequent use of graphic organizers, concept maps, & critical inquiry.

How other UNLV teachers might adopt this practice

Build community
Integrate intentional name/identity teambuilding to review syllabus, class expectations, & course. Maintain weekly.

• One clap for good things in student’s lives.
• Co-construct cooperation contract with shared agreements; everyone signs; posted in class.
• Use dialogic monitoring tool to encourage participation. Think-pair-share & neighbor talks.

Think about your thinking
Teach Bloom’s taxonomy by co-constructing content related H.O.T. question stems. Motivate students to move out of the parking L.O.T. of education and into the H.O.T. spot of innovators, CEOs, leaders, and critical thinkers in your content area.

Collaborative learning
Use role cards to teach group work. Allow students to negotiate roles to ensure everyone has a meaningful way to contribute.

Shift to Formative Assessments
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Self-management & recognition
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