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Connecting with Students as a Motivator for Learning

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Connecting with Students as a Motivator for Learning

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**Why does compassion matter in the classroom?**

Students want to feel cared for and that their instructors have their best educational interests in mind. Having an instructor who demonstrates compassion and shows empathy toward students creates a positive classroom climate and the course is more meaningful to the students at UNLV.

**Why is compassion important?**

1. Rigor without compassion is risky and may set students up for failure instead of success.
2. Compassion is a baseline orientation for educators to begin their teaching.
3. Three things occur when educators teach with compassion:
   - Teaching improves and is more satisfying.
   - Students perform and feel better.
   - Classes are more welcoming and inviting (Kohler-Evans & Barnes, 2015).

**How do you use compassion in the classroom?**

Compassion is what is showed and shared with others.

**Examples:**
- Bringing awareness to what students think and feel.
- Educators learn to give up the desire for absolute control over the classroom.
- Create more tolerance, more openness, more listening and more room for exploration (Zinger, 2008).

**Student Feedback**

“She is the most amazing, inspiring, and dedicated professor that I have ever had. I am getting emotional writing this because the way that she cares about us as students is so overwhelming and inspiring that it makes me so sad to know I only have one more week left with her as my teacher. This class has pushed me in the best way, motivated me to go beyond the limits, and inspired me to really be the best teacher to my future students that I can be” (EDEL 323 Student, Spring 2018 Course Evaluation).

**Resources**

For techniques on using compassion in the classroom:
https://education.ufl.edu/showing-compassion-to-connect-with-students/

https://luc.edu/soc/stories/archive/teachingwithpassionandcompassion.shtml

For tools and strategies on using compassion in the classroom:

**Adoption and Advice**

- Take the time to get to know your students.
- Ask questions about their learning goals.
- Use humor often.
- Send out encouraging and positive announcements and emails throughout the semester.
- Be approachable.
- LISTEN

**Suggested Ideas**

Be the instructor or professor you always wanted. Smile often and share stories about yourself. Allow students to talk about themselves and what is important to them about what they learn.

“Life is the act of planting seeds. The image of the seed, growing in the dark, wet ground while reaching upward and forward into the light, a seed that, given nurturing nutrients, sunlight, warmth, and care, lives to bear fruit and nourish the world. Compassion, when given to another, is as the sower scattering the seeds. Only by promoting acts of compassion can we turn the tide of history” (Kohler-Evans & Barnes, 2015).