Critically Thinking about Real-World Content and Practices: The Theory Show & Tell

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Critically Thinking about Real-World Content and Practices: The Theory Show & Tell

Communicating Analytical Skills Using Aural and Textual Channels

Need for the Practice
Analytical and communication skills list high on employers’ priorities. Beyond assessing comprehension through exams and research papers, this project requires:
- Pilot research using content analysis
- In-class presentation
- Short-form synthesis of findings

Requirements for the Practice
- Students prepare a five-minute “show and tell” presentation of self-chosen topics that illustrate specific concepts or theories drawn from lecture, textbook, class videos, or reading materials.
- Data for analysis can include academic journal articles, print magazine articles, advertisements, Internet news stories, web sites or posts, television, film, or other media, with instructor approval.
- Students must explain the significance of their chosen example to the course specifically and explain its importance within wider society.
- Students create a one-page handout using text and graphics that details and summarizes their findings.
- Students provide copies of their handout to classmates and the instructor.

More We Know, the More We See

Comprehension and Creativity
- Students hone public speaking and multimedia skills.
- Students practice design and writing skills as well as demonstrate comprehension of course materials.

Presentation Resources and Tools
- Multimedia content used as data from online and streaming sites are readily available and easily accessed.
- PowerPoint and Prezi are encouraged for use during in-class presentations.
- Examples of handouts from past classes are posted on UNLV WebCampus, or can be posted on a non-campus website, such as Facebook.

Student Feedback
“What Stood Out Most to Me”
- “Everyone really showed me more than just the basics and opened my eyes to more counterhegemonic* things that I’m not used to.”
- “…how much of the content we learned in class related to things I saw every day but didn’t know the type of intention it had.”
- “The more you know, the more you see”* and I now I recognize this so I am constantly aware of what I am supporting and if it is positive.”

*Concepts from lecture and readings

Ready-Made Starting Points and Real-World Inspiration

Students as Resources
- Students’ own interests, career goals, and expertise serve as sources for data and content.
- Application of material learned from unrelated courses further enhances the teaching (hence learning) of current course content.

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Course Content
- As lecture material, presentation content becomes course content, ideal for assessment purposes and for use in future lectures by the instructor.
- The Theory Show and Tell can be used in any course in which application of theory to practice—and real-world examples of theory in action—requires concrete visuals.
- The application of critical thinking skills to any course material requires students not only to seek examples of theories, terms, and concepts from class, but also to explain their findings to their peers clearly.
- For large classes, the presentation aspect can be voluntary or for extra credit, while the synthesis and example itself are provided to the instructor and to students.

Cultivating Course Content, Critical Thinking, and Synthesis

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