Reflective Teaching Portfolio

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NEA Project–Pathways to Global Communication

**Part I–Reflecting on Teaching, Practice, and Communication**

**Teaching Philosophy**

My teaching philosophy is that I believe all people can benefit from the study of the History of Art. We live in a visual culture and it is important to understand the original context of the images that bombard us every day. Moreover, I teach about cultures that are labeled “non-Western.” It is my sincerest belief that it is important to approach culture from a global perspective. Even though I teach about very ancient concepts, I believe that my students can relate to the works of art regardless of their background because human beings all have the same concerns, wishes, desires, and fears. These have not changed over time, nor place!

**Benefits and Challenges of a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students**

The challenges that I face having linguistically diverse students in my class are ones of basic communication. There are often language barriers that are difficult to overcome. Many of the concepts that I teach are esoteric in nature; it is a challenge to chunk that information down into smaller portions in a way that can be understood by a linguistically diverse class.

**Changes in Classroom Practices for a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Class**

The ideas about language, diversity, and cross-cultural communication we discussed in the NEA workshops have helped me re-evaluate how I present information in class. I am in the process of simplifying the written material I give out to make it more effective. I have also been very careful about making sure that the students understand the context for the work that we learn about.

**Part II–Moving Theory into Practice: Diversity as Resource**

**Changes in Existing Lessons Due to Participating in the NEA Project**

I have recently started having my students recap the previous week’s lecture instead of me providing the review. For example, I will ask the class to name what they consider to be the three most important points in last week’s lecture.

When I show them videos or interactive websites in class, I now ask them, “What are the three ideas you take away from this video/interactive?” This allows students to express themselves in a way that wasn’t available to them when I simply recapped the information myself. It also gives me insight into what students are learning. I have been encouraging all the students to participate in these recaps and so far it has been quite successful.

**New Approaches and Assignments**

A new approach I am taking is that I am explaining my methods to my classes more. For example, I give them the “why” and the “context” for what I do. I will even explain something by saying, “The reason why I am doing is this is too…”

I am simplifying the written materials I give out so they are more effective for students. For example, I am in the process of redoing my slide lists. I have only included the identification of the artworks that are the most significant and I have pared down the vocabulary terms on the list.

When I write on the board in class, I am now also writing things in a direct, simplified way. I am consciously trying to make the material as understandable as possible.

**Changes to Evaluating Students**

My expectations have shifted when evaluating student’s paper writing. In writing I am looking more for the student’s intention and less for grammar perfection. I still maintain that there need to be grammatical standards, but I am no longer nitpicking every single tiny grammatical mistake. What a relief! This has enabled me to really enjoying reading student papers more.

**Part III–Teaching Goals**

**Teaching Goals for the Next Few Years**

I have already started to implement changes in my teaching practice. I want to go further with these changes. In the next few years, I want to revitalize my PowerPoints. I want them to reflect more straightforward messages. In simplifying the words and images, I hope I can make the information clearer in my visual materials. This is not going to be an easy task. Now, I am definitely more aware of how a student’s cultural experience guides his/her interpretation of both visual and verbal communication.