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President's Message

Marc Ebenfield - Director, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, University of New England

I should start by saying that these views are my own and not those of the New England Faculty Development Consortium or its board of directors.

In the Fall of 2018 I started my president's message with a quote from Yogi Berra "The future ain't what it used to be" and a definition of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity), an acronym used to describe expected conditions in our future. I thought those were appropriate concepts to lead into our fall 2018 conference keynote on artificial intelligence and our spring 2019 conference on education in the age of anxiety. Things felt tense. Academia was contracting. Racial tensions were mounting. There was a nervous sense of foreboding, but things continued with a general tempo of normalcy. Who knew in September 2018 what we would be facing in 2020?

On any objective scale things are far worse now then they were almost 2 years ago. The pandemic has killed hundreds of thousands of people. Millions are out of work. Racial prejudice, violence and the killing of Black men and women persists senselessly. Many institutions of higher education are facing budget crises. So why do I feel a sense of optimism about the future? I think it is because I have never seen so many people coming together with so much purpose.

White people are finally joining in significant numbers to lend their voices and political resources to the fight for equality. Marches in Vermont for Black Lives Matter have been referred to as alabaster armies. Soccer Leagues across the world have Black Lives Matter printed on their jerseys. NASCAR banned the confederate flag. There is a sense that maybe, finally, as a nation we can make progress to address the system of racism.

I have also been proud of the incredible effort being waged by all educators from kindergarten through Ph.D. programs to ensure their students get the care and support to persevere in this pandemic and the education they need to graduate or persist in their studies. I want to thank all of you for what you have done. Teachers are doing an amazing job, often with too few resources and training. Faculty development staff have really shone in their ability to provide rapid training, guidance and resources to help everyone shift quickly to a fully remote environment. Those

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sound contradictory, but you know what I mean. We have all pitched in, focused on our students and done a fantastic job in a very short time.

We are rethinking what we do and how we do it. We now have a critical mass of administrators, faculty and staff who have experienced new ways of working, connecting and educating. If we do this well, we can give more students access to better education than ever before. And we can help each other in this effort. As we have been forced to use technology to connect with those close to us, we have also found ways to reach out to people far away and create relationships and movements that I hope will be lasting.

This year NEFDC will host its first ever virtual conference on "Relationships Matter: Moving relationship-rich experiences to the center of teaching and learning." Peter Felten will walk us through his research and discuss how we can foster and preserve these relationships in a virtual world. I want to thank the NEFDC board for the creativity, enthusiasm and energy they bring to serving the faculty and faculty development community of New England. I look forward to seeing how we rethink our role in this changing landscape. I hope you join us.

SAVE THE DATE

Fall Conference

Friday, October 30, 2020

Speaker: Peter Felten

Keynote Address: Relationships matter: Moving relationship-rich experiences to the center of teaching and learning.

Interactive Workshop: Building Relationships in a Remote Learning Environment.

Peter Felten is executive director of the Center for Engaged Learning, assistant provost for teaching and learning, and professor of history at Elon University. He works with colleagues on institution-wide teaching and learning initiatives, and on the scholarship of teaching and learning. His recent books include "Relationship-rich Education: How Human Connections Drive Success in College," "Transformative Conversations: A Guide to Mentoring Communities among Colleagues in Higher Education" and "Transforming Students: Fulfilling the Promise of Higher Education".

First Ever

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Bridging Media: Shared Referents To Connect The Unfamiliar To The Familiar

Carey Borkoski, Ph.D., Ed.D. - Johns Hopkins University and Sara Donaldson, Ed.D. - Wheaton College (Massachusetts)

Introduction

Students enrolled in our classrooms enter these spaces with their own experiences, perspectives, and prior knowledge and it is incumbent upon course facilitators to learn about, integrate, and create a bridge for our students. Moreover, our assumptions about our students often enable or inhibit their potential. Hanstedt (2019) suggests educators need to focus less on course design that includes goals and learning objectives and more on the "messy human interests of the whole student." In this article, we introduce bridging media as a tool to help students learn to manage this messiness by guiding transitions into new learning environments, cultivating deep knowledge, and engaging in difficult conversations around seemingly intractable topics.

What is Bridging Media?

Bridging media represent online visual or audio media that promotes deep learning and social interaction and offers a connection or bridge from known to new (Anderson, 2008; Huang, 2002; Lajoie, 2014). Constructivism and andragogy both emphasize learner-centered, meaningful, and authentic case-based learning (Huang, 2002). Students enter learning spaces with experiences on which to draw but need structured opportunities to create new connections to this prior knowledge. Bridging media can help integrate students' own experiences with new ideas using audio and video to promote access to more meaningful discourse and discussion.

Effective bridging media help facilitate learning and connections (Cercone, 2008). Establishing an environment that supports social negotiation and critical reflection promotes transformative learning and may help students (and instructors) make meaning of the world and their own positionality (Cercone, 2008; Huang, 2002). Bridging media, arguably, take the "concept of social construction of knowledge to a new level" (Lajoie, 2014, p. 638)\ inviting students and instructors into respectful and informal environments to engage in critical analysis of shared artifacts.

Before crafting assignments or assessments, instructors need to consider what we want our students to learn from our courses. Hanstedt (2019) suggests that we should focus on cultivating informed students capable of asking good questions, engaging with diverse stakeholders, and offering thoughtful solutions to address wicked, real-world problems. While Hanstedt describes myriad strategies, we propose bridging media as another strategy to explore and navigate wicked problems. The following section describes how instructors use bridging media to facilitate student onboarding into new learning spaces, promote deeper learning in the classroom, and support critical and difficult conversations.

Student Onboarding and Transitions

According to Schlossberg (1981), every adult experiences transitions or change that often require new social connections and opportunities to see oneself and others in a different way. When individuals enter new learning spaces they move through their own unique transition. It is critical that educators recognize and help students notice and process these change moments.

One way to support and facilitate this change process is through onboarding. Onboarding supports and facilitates transitions through structured efforts to integrate newcomers to organizations. This intentional onboarding may also apply to classrooms, organizations, and other learning spaces (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007). For example, Holmes, Willis, and Woods (2016) described doctoral student onboarding as an introduction to the program culture, policies and procedures, and culture. Bridging media, in the form of familiar video and audio, provide tools to create familiar and relevant spaces where individuals can navigate new places, networks, and ideas.

Smoothing Transitions for New Students

Bridging media may prove effective for students transitioning to a new setting by reducing the anxiety brought on by tensions between the familiar and unfamiliar. Simple videos of other students who have experienced these firsts and can share stories about how they felt before and after the transition can help the entering students connect with their new community. Seeing and hearing that others have been in similar situations,

creates alignment between the environment and their own identity, helping to reduce student stress. For example, in an online program, a faculty member interviewed and posted a series of student, faculty, and staff videos before first-year students started the program. The interviews introduced this new community and shared stories of transitions into doctoral studies. The incoming cohort of students reported feeling more connected with the other doctoral students and a sense of relief from seeing a familiar face of someone who had succeeded during their first year. Through bridging media, instructors and others can create shared referents that may contribute to reducing the distress created by feelings of incongruence between an individual student's identity and the attributes of this new and unfamiliar learning environment, helping them focus more on learning rather than attending to the anxiety created by the transition.

Promoting Belonging into a Scholarly Community

Implementing bridging media may also reduce the students' sense of transactional distance by making connections between familiar knowledge and often complex and unfamiliar theories (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005; Moore, 1983). These shared referents may initiate students' sense of belonging by cultivating community and peer connections, thus smoothing the transition into this new scholarly space. For example, in a first-year doctoral leadership course students are required to learn new and unfamiliar theories which may be anxiety-inducing and intimidating. To address this discomfort, one of the authors used TedTalks to showcase leadership theory through the experiences and stories of other leaders and practitioners. These videos served to bridge students' own experiences and professional knowledge to an academic dialogue around unfamiliar content. Although these students bring tremendous knowledge and a strong professional identity into this course, being asked to explore unfamiliar content in a new scholarly community can be uncomfortable. The TedTalks offer a way to invite students into this unfamiliar community through the shared and familiar experiences of individuals in the TedTalk and, as they engage in class discussion with their peers.

Students often feel more at ease when they are able to access course material through familiar media that bridge the learning to their own work. Students in this course suggested that using the TedTalks helped them to better understand the leadership theory and see the relevance and application of the concepts. Moreover, talking about other leaders' experiences created a shared referent that was familiar and shifted the attention onto someone else helping diffuse their own anxiety and self-consciousness around learning and applying new theories. Asking students to explore new concepts with bridging media promote vibrant conversation where students start to apply the unfamiliar theories to a familiar setting and creates a learning scenario with less stress and an opportunity to shift their cognitive load to applying new theories rather than managing the discomfort.

Promoting Deep Learning

Deep learning results from active integration and synthesis of different ideas through social negotiation as individuals reflectively bring together personal and shared worlds (Denise, 1999; Ke, 2010; Lajoie, 2014). However, not all social exchanges promote meaningful learning. The effectiveness of social learning is dependent upon the level of critical discourse present in discussions, as it is the disequilibrium created by reflecting upon divergent perspectives that leads to deeper learning and meaningful integration (Ke, 2010; Lajoie, 2014; van Es, 2012). Encouraging critical discourse requires a " "collaborative, respective, mutual, and informal" learning environment to allow learners to feel safe presenting and reflecting on new ideas with others (Cercone, 2008, p. 145). As illustrated above, shared referents, such as bridging media, create a low risk, common ground around which the group can consider different interpretations and reasoning (Cercone, 2008; Ke, 2010; Lajoie, 2014; van Es, 2012). When coupled with open-ended prompts, collaborative discussion of bridging media help learners reflect upon and connect new ideas to existing knowledge and experience, thus promoting deep learning and transfer to novel contexts (Cercone, 2008; Denise, 1999; Ke & Xie, 2009).

Promoting Personal Connections

One related strategy is the use of instructor created audio files or podcasts to help create a safe learning environment and promote critical self-reflection by creating connections and familiarity with a professor's experiences and providing real-world examples of difficult concepts and topics. For example, students in research methods courses often struggle with terminology such as different types of variables. Creating a short audio message relating a non-academic scenario, such as training for a road race, can serve as a bridge between students' lived experience and these difficult concepts as students will be able to see that personal characteristics such as age and experience are independent variables, the amount of wind and number of hills are moderating variables, and

the finishing time is the dependent variable. Additionally, the creation of the podcast itself around a personal activity outside of the classroom, makes the professor more relatable and demonstrates authentic care for the students by showing how their learning is being considered during non-work time. This type of personal connection helps establish a learning environment that promotes critical discourse and deep learning.

Promoting Learning Synthesis

In addition to collaborative discourse, deep learning requires critical reflection as learners synthesize new ideas and perspectives and connect them to existing knowledge and experience. Using existing media presentations can promote critical reflection as students use the video as a bridge to bring together ideas from across multiple learning experiences. For example, in one of the author's undergraduate teaching methods course, Roni Ellington's TED Talk "The Future of STEM Education" was used to help pre-service teachers reflect on and bring together ideas around effective STEM learning, classroom applications, and equity. The power of this model seems evident in the following student reflection:

> *I watched this TED Talk by Roni Ellington and it really made me think... Her discussion of [the four transformative framework] elements was very insightful and connected closely to a lot of what I saw and experienced in my field placement. "[Ellington's questions]made me think of one of the things we talked about in class in regard to having high expectations for all students, and to be consistent about having these for ourselves and for our students. I thought a lot about this both as I watched my supervising practitioner work with students, what I was asked to do when working with students, and in planning and teaching my lessons.*

Supporting Critical and Difficult Conversations

Males and colleagues (2010) propose that three types of interaction occur when groups explore ideas and perspectives outside their current thinking and practice: praising, advising, and challenging. Of these, only challenging interactions, or probing to push thinking, lead to deep learning and broadened perspectives. Bridging media represent a means for students to travel across diverse communities, listening to and gaining respect for different perspectives as they engage in discourse around the shared referent and come to understand the nuances of competing or conflicting ideas (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006). In this way, bridging media help promote critical discourse and scaffold challenging interactions as individuals are able to engage in evidence-based reasoning around different interpretations of safer, less personal examples while relationships of trust develop (Lajoie, 2014; van Es, 2012).

For example, multicultural teacher education entails both learning about cultural differences and one's own identity, as well as developing educators' sense of agency around promoting equity. Part of this work is examining, critiquing, and comparing different identity development theories, a task many students find difficult as they struggle to connect the key theoretical elements to their own lived experience. Brookfield and Preskill (2005) propose that "getting students to talk about a memorable experience in their lives that somehow connects to the topic…[is] less intimidating for them than launching straight into a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of a theory" (p. 73). Using a video such as "A Girl Like Me" (Davis, 2005), which highlights findings from Clark's doll study, can provide a safe, shared experience to which students can connect both elements from different identity development theories and their own personal identity development. Additionally, engaging in critical dialogue around the potential origins of the children in this video can serve as motivation for course participants to examine the impact of existing conditions in their professional contexts and how they can promote the change necessary to help their students develop positive self-perceptions.

Preliminary Evidence

The research literature and our anecdotal experiences with bridging media suggest using artifacts that include podcasts, TedTalks and other shared referents smooth difficult transitions, cultivate students' sense of community and belonging, promote scholarly dialogue, and help facilitate difficult conversations. During several sections of a first year leadership course, we collected student data that supports the evidence already discussed (see Borkoski, Donaldson, & Caldwell, in press, for study details).

For example, using a survey administered to these online doctoral students, we collected quantitative and qualitative data on students' experiences centering discussion of leadership theory on instructor-chosen podcasts and TedTalks. Students across multiple sections reported that bridging media contributed to their learning, deepened their understanding of the readings, and clarified questions about leadership theory. The students also reported that discussions about bridging

media lead to more engagement and connectedness with the course and their peers (see Borkoski et al., in press, for specific data).

Students' open-ended responses provided further evidence of the benefits of bridging media. For example, one student said that bridging media "clarif[ied] the vastly different leadership theories we were exploring" and another described the shared referent as "relevant...to how I can grow as a leader." Additionally, two other students noted the value of "being able to talk through the content questions and interacting with peers" and "really reflect[ing] on my professional context and determ[ing] ways in which I can apply the information."

Bridging media, as both OER and instructor-generated resources,are flexible and adaptable for diverse students in a variety of educational settings including face-to-face, online, and hybrid. Moreover, these are tools that may have purposes outside of the classroom including student advising, faculty meetings and professional learning, or more corporate settings. Bridging media offer a means to support individual transitions, deep learning, and the ability to engage in challenging conversations on a variety of topics.

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Using Flash Activities To Stimulate Positive Student Engagement And Promote Critical Thinking Skills

Kelly-Anne Doherty DeFao, J.D. - Pine Manor College

Struck by the energy of "flash mob" pop-up performances, I wanted to infuse that type of quick yet focused energy into my early morning class to create a stimulating and fun environment for student learning. To that end, I designed flash activities to be short, unannounced exercises completed at the beginning of class time to introduce students to new vocabulary and class themes for a better understanding of core concepts. To encourage student buy-in, participating students earned extra credit points for completing these interactive, low-stakes exercises.

Flash activities are purposely low-stakes activities as research makes clear such types of exercises promote a number of student-centered benefits that I wanted to promote in my class, namely anxiety reduction, inquisitiveness, and confidence building (Warnock, 2013). Low-stakes activities reduce student anxiety over grades, which then "create[es] an atmosphere that is friendly to curiosity" (Eyler, 2018, p. 41). By fostering a safe environment that stimulated student questions and exploration of course content, I was able to introduce my criminal justice students to an array of foundational concepts in the legal and political system of the US and beyond. Furthermore, Eyler advises that, as "teachers, it is our job to help students reconnect with their curiosity and to use our courses as laboratories for discovery" (2018 p. 39). Eyler's call-to-action is useful because it reinforces the notions of the learning space as fundamentally a site for encounters and innovation where a non-science classroom such as mine becomes that laboratory. Low-stakes activities also build student confidence as they give students several chances to succeed in grasping class concepts (Schrank, 2016; Warnock, 2013). As flash activities can only increase a student's grade through extra credit point earnings, students had the freedom to "risk failure in order to learn" (Eyler, 2018, p. 214).

How Flash Activities Work

All flash activities are interdisciplinary-friendly and can be used for any class content. For my early morning criminal justice class, students completed several of the following flash activities during the previous semester:

- Sketch a concept or find a photo that speaks to or explains a principle/issue from previous readings to then present to the class. This activity can showcase students' understanding of a class concept or highlight their misunderstanding of it. For example, students were directed to draw or to find a photo that connoted to them the term "arrest." As the concept has a nuanced legal definition, this activity pushed students to critically think about their prior readings on arrest. The fact that the majority of students chose to sketch or use photos of handcuffs highlighted their common misunderstanding that handcuff use always equals an arrest. Because the flash activity was a fun, low-stakes activity, students willingly acknowledged their collective error and through follow-up discussion worked together to better grasp the concept. Echoing Eyler, this low-stakes activity design emphasized to the students that it was their knowledge building and understanding of the concept that was valuable (2018, p. 214).
- Conduct an online search using Google or other search engine to find a song that addresses, celebrates, or demonizes some running theme from the class or, if applicable, a more specific topic. (To create competition, you can also have groups of students race to find such a song.) As murder has long populated news coverage, students rather unsurprisingly chose themed songs that glorified or demonized killings, lawful and otherwise. They then dissected song lyrics and led class discussions on the applicability of common defenses like self-defense. These exercises propelled students into creating real working definitions of core crimes (again knowledge building) which they used in various class discussions throughout the semester.
- Write a song, rap, or poem illustrating your understanding of a class concept or fundamental public policy. (Instructors may prepare a word bank to help if necessary.) Because these were low-stakes activities, students felt free to wrestle with controversial topics like police brutalities and do so in creative pieces to ultimately showcase their understanding and their interpretation of the lines between legal and illegal conduct among law enforcement. With

newfound confidence, students then felt empowered to use their individual works as springboards to tackle more sophisticated class topics and vocabulary.

- Alternative to above: prepare a song, rap, or poem that illustrates your lack of clarity or confusion with a topic already discussed so that the class as a whole can work collaboratively to clarify the concept.
- Find a video regarding a key concept from our last class lesson. Divide into small groups to assess the accuracy and completeness of the video, along with any corrections students might suggest. Students then present their critiques of the videos to the class. For later homework (or a longer class activity), students can create their own videos explaining that particular concept. For criminal justice, probable cause is the legal standard for several important concepts including search warrant issuances and arrest. In working together to correct inconsistencies in probable cause-featured videos, students, free from grade anxiety, felt empowered to critique in detail what they perceived as teaching failures and to offer class strategies that showcased their understanding of this concept and its wide-spread application in the field.
- Divide into groups for "concept charade." Pick one core concept from one of the previous classes. (Instructors can determine whether they want students to have speaking or non-speaking roles.) Other students must guess what the concept is. This low-stakes flash activity gave students the freedom and confidence to act out and then opine on several hot topics including racial bias, profiling, and media subjectivity. Post-activity discussions highlighted their growing abilities to forge connections among these topics to various past public policy lessons.
- Find a local news story about ____ (fill in your lesson plan theme) and explain it to the class. Outline or highlight the major theme and specifically relate it to a discussion from one of our last three (3) classes. Students used local criminal stories involving musicians, sports figures, and politicians about whom they were already curious to explain class themes. With positive feedback upon the flash activity completion, students then grew confident in being able to tackle more sophisticated legal arguments that they originally shied away from during past classes.
- Without using your class notes or book, make flashcards that you could distribute to your parent, friend, boss, or significant other that explain 3 major concepts from the last class. Because of the low-stakes aspect to this activity, and the overall fun environment established by these ongoing activities, even struggling students had the confidence to name their problem areas and ask the class collectively for help in order to successfully demonstrate a level of understanding with course content.

Feedback/Observations

At semester's end, a small number of students (10 out of 13 enrolled) completed a survey of both quantitative and qualitative questions that assessed the use of flash activities in several areas including enjoyment, applicability to the understanding of class objectives, and their significance to their learning success. I also factored in my general classroom observations when announcing that a particular class would begin with a flash activity.

Attentiveness and Enjoyment

When not using a flash activity on any particular day, I observed that students were slow to engage, particularly as this was an early morning class. However, with the introduction of a flash activity in class, students' energy levels and engagement noticeably increased. Students were attentive from the onset of class. They listened to flash activity directions, asked clarifying questions, and delved right into the activity, whether it involved the use of their phones to find photos or songs, or actively listening to news stories to gather important details to connect to our subject matter. Student feedback, by way of the written survey, formalized my initial assessment. One hundred percent (100%) of surveyed students enjoyed or strongly enjoyed flash activities (with an average score of 4.7, 5 being the highest (See Figure 1)).

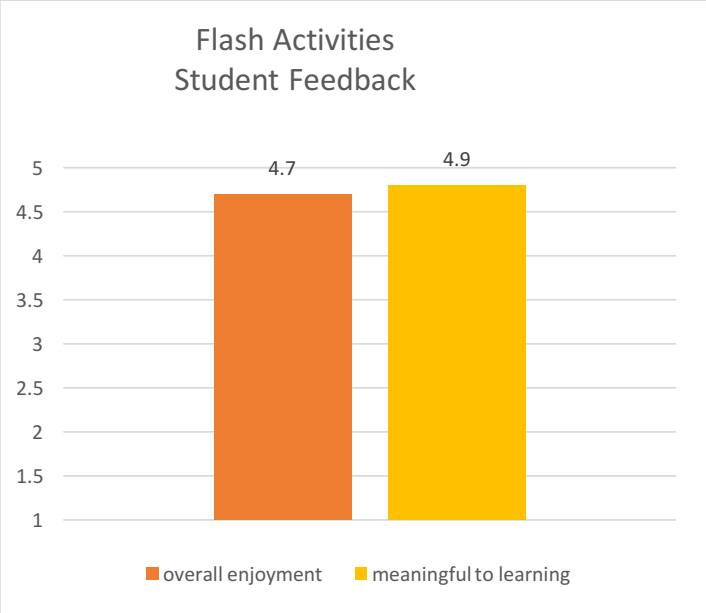

Figure 1: Average Likert survey responses (n=10) regarding flash activity enjoyment and connection to student learning (1=strongly disagree with statement to 5= strongly agree with statement).

Qualitative data from student surveys revealed that flash activities created a positive environment in which to learn. Students noted that flash activities promoted a more relaxed and fun classroom atmosphere. Specifically, students enjoyed the "hands on" aspect of flash activities as it allowed them to freely "interact more and talk about the subject." Overall, many reported that flash activities "make learning more fun." Students further reported that they primarily enjoyed the use of popular and familiar student-used mediums (think social media) in flash activities, along with their low-stakes design, as it allowed them to concentrate on what was new and curious to them: the class concept itself and the (sometimes surprising) awareness that these concepts or themes were recognizable in everyday, familiar media.

Honing Critical Thinking Skills

One hundred percent of surveyed students (100%) agreed that devoting class time to flash activities was meaningful or strongly meaningful to student learning (with an average score of 4.9, 5 being the highest (See Figure 1)). In their written surveys, students commented that flash activities, designed so they could choose modern examples from which to explain their understanding of class concepts, helped them to turn abstract (and academic) ideas into real and relatable concepts to apply to their daily lives. Specifically, students noted that flash activities more readily helped them to identify connections between core principles of criminal justice and their application in the world through recognition of their appearance in songs, in news reporting, and on social media. As one student simply remarked, "I now know how to broach [the topic]." According to students, flash activities allowed them to deconstruct larger concepts into manageable pieces to study and critique in their own terms. Further, students reported that the very experience of finding their own examples of core concepts and vocabulary, particularly in mediums with which they were familiar, helped them to retain those concepts more readily than lecturing or reading about them on their own. In flash activities "[we] took modern examples that we see and hear every day and when we find ways to apply it, it sticks better than someone just telling us." Over the course of the semester, our classroom then became a "laboratory for discovery" (Eyler, 2018, p. 39).

Conclusion

Designed as low-stakes, fun activities using many student-familiar media, flash activities achieved positive classroom engagement and learning. With no grade-driven stress, students willingly participated in flash activities and gained confidence in their abilities to tackle new vocabulary and explore core class themes. Within this relaxed environment, students' critical thinking skills also improved. As seen particularly through class discussions, students were able to dissect class concepts found in these everyday mediums and develop real working definitions of these terms, bridging the classroom and their world. As a result, flash activities fostered relevant, meaningful, and memorable student learning. Encouraged by this positive feedback, I will continue to incorporate flash activities in my class to promote an overall dynamic learning environment.

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Implementing A Mid-Semester Assessment Process (Map) In Your Course: Using Reflection To Help Reduce Faculty And Student Anxiety

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Anxiety and learning

College students, instructors and faculty developers have all experienced and witnessed the drastic ways in which anxiety has encroached into the classroom environment. The pressures of the current highly competitive academic and future job markets to be the best and to know the most can promote stress and emotional distress for both students and faculty. Further, when teaching and learning expectations between students and faculty are not well aligned it can create tensions within the classroom. If not addressed such tensions can manifest as unnecessary anxiety which can cause individuals to feel unmotivated and distracted, and may also affect their performance (Seipp, 1991; Bandura, A. 1988). These are just some of the reasons why it is important for instructors to create a supportive learning environment which takes into account the unique learning preferences of their students.

However, creating such a supportive learning environment, that also effectively aligns teaching and learning expectations, can be both difficult and stressful, especially if pedagogical training was not included in one's Ph.D. work. One way to help mitigate some of the stresses associated with the alignment of teaching and learning expectations is through the implementation of a Midterm Assessment Process (MAP).

What is a Midterm Assessment Process (MAP)?: Purpose and process

Though conceived of and implemented in various ways, we define a MAP as a *voluntary, confidential,* and *formative* student feedback process, with a follow-up consultation with the instructor. The process provides instructors with a mid-semester opportunity to obtain a snapshot of what is currently happening in a respective course and to talk about ways to immediately address any issues that may arise. Specifically, the MAP should be designed in such a way that it confidentially elicits reflective feedback, from both students and faculty, about the teaching and learning process. This process works best when followed by a guided faculty consultation which provides faculty with an opportunity to collaboratively (along with the MAP consultant) evaluate student feedback with a consultant, and then problem-solve ways to improve instruction for deeper learning. One of the great advantages of this process is that it requires minimal effort on the part of both faculty and students (normally about 25 minutes of class time and a one hour consultation), but it has the potential to yield long-lasting results.

Some of the following practices have proven helpful for implementing a successful process: The consultant should be introduced by the faculty member and in so doing, encourage their students to honestly and confidentially (as they will not be present) during the process) share their thoughts about how the class is going so that they can use their feedback to make potential adjustments to the course. The consultant should then share a brief explanation of the MAP's purpose. Specifically, we recommend student work in small groups (of 2-4) to collaboratively discuss and answer two simple, yet well-constructed questions about their course. For example: 1) *"What aspects of this course are most beneficial for your learning (i.e., what should your professor keep doing)?"*; and 2) *"What specific and actionable changes could improve your learning in this class?"* The first question is designed to elicit positive student feedback about how and what things are going well in the course (from their perspective); while the second question offers opportunity for constructive (specific, actionable, doable) suggestions about how the course may be improved. Answering these two questions in small groups enables students to, perhaps for the first time, openly and honestly think and talk about how they learn in relation to how the course content is both organized and delivered. It also affords students a chance to genuinely hear each other's perspectives, a practice which can help build community and reduce stress. Further, this process tends to provide rich, comprehensive, and clearly articulated feedback.

After students have brainstormed and listed their ideas, we recommend having them identify the most essential ideas with an asterisk (*). This allows student the opportunity to

synthesize their thoughts and isolate the topics that are most important to their group, thus providing them with a vehicle to voice their praises and concerns. We also recommend using an online survey system to collect groups' responses, with one student per group accessing a link where they can record group comments, as this makes both the collection and analysis process easier.

Finally, once the groups have finished their survey, the consultant should engage the class in a large group discussion about what they believe is most essential to them. This process can also help the consultant identify student consensus regarding areas which they believe may be most helpful for their instructors to know and address.

MAP - benefits to students

As has already been noted, a well-executed MAP has the potential to help align teaching and learning expectations, which we argue can help reduce academic anxiety. We propose that a MAP can help alleviate anxiety in a couple of specific ways. First, the data collection process creates both the *time* and *opportunity* for students to reflect upon the *what* and the *why* aspects of their learning. Indeed, Glen and Nelson (1988) assert that if students are not given the opportunity to think seriously about their experiences, stereotypes and incorrect suppositions may be reinforced. Thus, the ability to consciously pause, recall, and reevaluate previous *course-based learning* experiences can be quite helpful for obtaining (or maintaining) a balanced and accurate perspective. Properly guiding students through such a process of reflection upon their learning, can help them think about how they learn in relation to how they are being taught, which has the potential to help reduce their stress levels.

Second, since this process enables individuals to reflect in a *collaborative* manner, this gives them the chance to genuinely listen to and consider each other's perceptions. Listening to each other's perspectives can help bring a level of clarity by helping them "see" new aspects of their classroom experiences that they may not have previously considered. Such an experience may help them, for example, to realize that perhaps there are positive aspects of their class that they had not previously realized, or, alternatively, that students may share similar concerns when they had originally thought that they were "alone" in those feelings.

Third, this facilitated process affords students the unique opportunity to have a "voice" and a certain level of "agency," as they get to formally suggest alternative approaches in both a constructive and confidential manner. Taken together, this process has the potential to reduce academic anxiety among students.

The reflective faculty consultation: process and benefits

Once the MAP data is collected, the consultant should thematically analyze it, prepare a report for the instructor, and then meet to go over the results in what we refer to as a reflective consultation. The reflective consultation is a time for the consultant to carefully guide the faculty member through an active reflection process focused specifically upon their teaching practices in relation to student learning. One way to do that is to begin by having the faculty member identify what it is they hope to get out of the MAP process. Once they have determined their overarching goal(s), they can proceed with answering the same questions posed to their students. This reflective activity is what Rolfe (1999) refers to as a 'retrospective reflection carried out after and usually away from the event' (p. 21); and what Schon (1983) refers to as reflection-on-action. It is a powerful reflective activity which causes faculty to think deeply about their instructional processes. Such a process gives instructors the opportunity to actively think about and verbalize their thoughts about teaching and learning in a collaborative process with the consultant, thus encouraging them to increase their competency as reflective practitioners.

After faculty have had some time to be reflect upon what is going well and what can be adjusted to improve learning, we suggest having them read through students' comments, looking for and talking about similarities and differences in their perspectives. When discrepancies appear in their perspectives, this affords faculty a chance to pause and think about what is happening and why and then to actively discuss areas where they may need improvement. We suggest that the reflective discussion and subsequent collaborative problem-solving process which occurs between the consultant and faculty member should eventually result in the development of an "action plan." Thus, this guided reflective process can help the faculty member make targeted connections between what they are doing (or not doing) and their students' perceptions/responses (i.e., their attitudes, grades, attendance, etc.) in a supportive and productive manner.

Development of an Action Plan

One of the most beneficial aspects of the reflective MAP process is the development of a "strategic" action plan. The plan is a simple, achievable set of goals which take into

consideration the instructor's reflection, student feedback, and the objective insight and resources provided by the MAP consultant/colleague. The action plan has the potential to empower instructors to strategically implement important changes in the context of both their immediate course as well as in the next iteration(s) of that course. Examples of questions to address in an action plan are as follows: a) what are some **small and helpful tweaks** (e.g., providing goals for each discussion session) you can make immediately?; b) what are some **bigger changes** (e.g., restructuring schedule or assignments) you can make throughout the semester?; c) what are some **substantive changes** (e.g., course design choices) you can make in a future semester?; and d) what suggestions **will you not change** because of your pedagogical or philosophical perspective (Payette and Brown, 2018). However, if this process is to be productive, this plan should eventually be shared, in some form, with students.

Reflection is a powerful way to learn!

Personal and professional reflection is commonly considered to be a useful practice and tool for learning (Giminez, 1999, 2010; Johns and Freshwater, 1998; Schön, 1983) even though reflection has been conceptualized in numerous ways in education. For example, Reid, (1993) defines reflection as "a process of reviewing an experience of practice in order to describe, analyze, evaluate and so inform learning about practice" (p.305). While Boud et al. (1985) define reflection as "a forum of response of the learner to experience" (page18). Schön's (1987) definition is slightly different in that he regards the act of reflection as a process of both reflecting-on-action, or reflecting *after* we have done something, and as reflecting-in-action, or *while* we are doing something. We believe that reflection, however it is defined or conceptualized, is a necessary part of the learning process and that although any form of reflection can be useful, we have adopted Schon's concept of reflection-on-action is an effective frame for the MAP. Specifically, we believe that the act of pausing, at the midpoint of the semester, to reflect upon the processes and progress of a course can help both students and instructors critically evaluate the effectiveness of various philosophies and pedagogies for learning.

Learning the skill of reflection-on-action can help instructors assess their actual practice and learn how to restructure their instructional approach to impact learning. Schön (1987) also asserts that competent and experienced professionals tend to employ a reflection-in-action practice, which is often an automatic, "in the moment" response to an issue. Therefore, we concur with Johns (1998), who points out that 'reflection one action can promote 'reflection in' action. In other words, if individuals are guided through the reflective process, they can begin developing the skills to become reflective practitioners themselves, implementing a cycle of consistent reflection in their contextual practice.

Finally, we argue that the implementation of a MAP provides a means for faculty to practice the skill of critical reflection. According to Johns (2000), the employment of critical reflection is helpful to instructors as it provides "a window through which the practitioner can view and focus self within the context of his/her own lived experience in ways that enable him/her to confront, understand and work towards resolving the contradictions within his/her practice between what is desirable and actual practice" (p 34).

Concluding thoughts

It is for these reasons that we assert that the MAP experience holds promise for helping both faculty and students take a moment to critically pause and think about the teaching and learning process. Doing so enables them to recognize things that are going well, while also providing them the opportunity to reflect upon some areas that could be improved so as to align the teaching and learning process in order to increase learning and lessen anxiety. Discontinuities between students and faculty perspectives, when they arise, can provide important insights leading to an enriched reflection process. In the end, it seems that this process can serve as a transparent and healthy communication mechanism which can reduce anxiety because it has the potential to help build a caring and trusting relationship between students and their instructors. In such an environment stress can potentially be reduced.

However, it is important to note that the MAP process and employment of reflection is only effective when student feedback is taken seriously. Therefore, it is important that the faculty member genuinely thanks their students for their feedback and more importantly follows through with the implementation of their action plan and continues to reflect-in and on-action.

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