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English 609

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Portfolio Reflection

In my philosophy of teaching assignment, I discuss how students who feel welcome and comfortable in a classroom are more likely to engage with the material and expand beyond their comfort zones. This is an idea that can and should be applied to every assignment and activity that is provided to your students. Ways that you can create a learning environment in which your students feel centered are by giving them control over the ways or materials they use to learn in the classroom. This is done by allowing for more liquid, creative final projects instead of a test, by allowing them to select their own research topic for a project, which is a big boost for momentum in productivity, as my students shared with my how much easier it was to build a multimedia essay project about something they cared about than about a pre-selected topic. I also gave control to the students by allowing them to choose certain aspects of their learning activities. For example, when the time for our first peer review came around, I had the class vote on their preferred method peer review, with options like digital review, group reviews, paired reviews, or anonymous reviews, available to be voted on, which resulted in higher rates of involvement. For my rhetorical design assignment, I outlined another flexible project, this one being a multimedia digital story project. This project is a group project that will foster social connections and push students to share artistically formatted research on a topic of their interest. This continues to give control over content to the students while also encouraging engagement with one and other. My digital demo was born of my own admiration of the weekly videos we were provided in this English 609 course, but instead, I used a project that I noticed the most stress over and that produced the most questions for me to answer, the annotated bibliography. I chose to create an audio and visual resource for students to go back and reference as they work on (or procrastinate) the project through the semester. This portfolio has helped me realize where I need to sharpen my skills as a teacher, like activity placement in my lesson plans and being a better multifaceted resource for my students. I have also seen where my intuition was right, with my students responding to my sharing of power and control in what we do in class. I see myself developing into a strong teacher, especially after this course and my semester of experience. I have learned from my peers and my own process and plan to take those lessons and evolve my methods accordingly. For example, I am going to sharpen my discussion leading skills when I have an apathetic class, perhaps with a fun way of giving someone the floor to speak (a ball or toy to toss in a post-COVID era, perhaps) or by rewarding those who engage with a prize. I intend to find ways to make each lesson and every ounce of effort from a student worth it to them, either through learning or feeling involved in our class. I intend for my digital portfolio to demonstrate the synergy I hope to create between my classes and I, making my class and its lessons something students want to engage with and can see the benefits of.