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Curriculum Overload! How to Engage Students and Cover Content!

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Introduction

- Focus on teaching
  - Does teaching automatically imply learning?
  - What do we know about learning that implicates teaching?
  - What should teachers do in order to maximize learning outcomes?
  - No resources for that level of detail
  - Resources should contribute to learner centered teaching

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Student-Centered Learning Versus Teacher Centered Learning

- Teacher centered learning – focus is on content
- Learner centered learning – focus is on learning
  - Creating climates in classes that advance learning outcomes
Why Critical Thinking is Important

- Critical thinking on the part of the learner inspires:
  - Understanding of concepts
  - New insights
  - Sense of familiarity
  - Retaining of knowledge

The Digital Age: Instant Change for the Profession, Educators, and Students

- Many articles and resources on what needs to change in the classroom
  - Level of detail does not include strategy or implementation
- As technology increases at a fast rate, not only are educators at a disadvantage of learning as quickly themselves – they are also at a disadvantage of how to effectively teach it

Today’s Students

- Students – hopeful, anxious, tentative
  - Want classes to be easy but expect them to be hard
  - Wish their program did not include Math, Science, or English
  - Usually do not speak unless called on
  - Want the teacher to tell them what to do
  - Education is something that is done unto them
The Balance of Power

Many theories and research have been published on the adverse effects of learning when processes are controlled by the teacher.

Consider this:

- Who decides what content students will learn in the course?
- Who controls the pace at which the content will be covered?
- Who determines the structures (assignments, tests) through which the material will be mastered?
- Who sets the conditions for learning? (attendance policies, deadlines)
- Who evaluates (grades) the quantity and quality of the learning that has occurred?
- Who regulates the flow of conversation in the classroom?
- Overall, who makes all of the important decisions about learning for students?

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How the Balance of Power Changes

- Power is shared
- The benefits of sharing the power
- Policies and practices that redistribute power
- Course content decisions
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Questions That Emerge When the Balance of Power Changes

• How much power is enough?
• How much freedom can they handle?
• Compromising professional responsibilities?

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Factors that Induce Resistance

• How do we change attitudes about the role of content?
• What about students at different skill levels?
• How do I adapt generic learning activities to fit the content I teach?

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The Function of Content

• How the function of content changes
• Understanding the new content-learning relationship
• The benefits of the content learning link
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Student Learning Dynamics

- Policies and practices that connect the content and learning
- Developing learner skill and awareness
  - Think developmentally
  - Make short activities routine
  - Target skill and awareness development
  - Take advantage of the need-to-know and ready-to-learn moments
  - Use supplemental material

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Learning Skill Development: Examples

- Teaching reading skills developmentally
- Letting students learn how to summarize
- Learning about how to learn from each other
- The learning center comes to class

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Developing Learner’s Self Awareness

- How do you learn?
- What can you learn from exam results?
- How can I make group work better?
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Integration of New Techniques

- How much content is enough?

- The role of the teacher
  - How the role changes
  - Defining the role

- What makes it hard to do?

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The Responsibility for Learning

- Getting students to accept the responsibility for learning

- Classroom climates conducive to learning

- Climates that build student autonomy and responsibility

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Three Principles

- It's about who is responsible for what in the teaching-learning process

- It is about logical consequences, not discipline

- It is about consistency in word and deed
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Policies and Practices that Create Climates for Learning

- Creating and maintaining climates conducive to learning
  - Involving students in the process
  - Getting feedback on the process
  - Tackling troubling behaviors constructively

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Policies and Practices that Develop Maturity and Responsibility

- Facing poor exam performance
- Accepting responsibility for assignment details
- Clarifying student responsibilities
- Making logical consequences real and compelling
- Empowering students to fix problems
- Questions That Emerge When Students Are Encouraged to Accept Responsibility for Learning

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Responding to Resistance

- Why students resist
  - Learner centered approaches are more work
  - Learner centered approaches are more threatening
  - Learner centered approaches involve losses
  - Learner centered approaches may be beyond students
Knowing Resistance When You See It

- Passive, nonverbal resistance
- Partial compliance
- Open resistance
- Overcoming the resistance

Faculty Resistance

- Sources of resistance
- Dealing with faculty resistance
  - Be mindful of the politics
  - Use the autonomy of your classroom.
  - Do not seek to convert the masses
  - Document the impact of your approaches
  - Find like minded colleagues

Making Learner Centered Teaching Work

- Get beyond techniques: think approach
- Approach change systematically
- Approach change incrementally
- Plan to tinker
- Set realistic expectations for success
References

- Applebee, D.C. (1990). Faculty and student perceptions of irritating behaviors in the college classroom. *Journal of Staff, Program, and Organizational Development, 8*(1), 41-49.