

Beyond the Podium

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The Surprising Classroom

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Discussion Panel

What has been the most surprising experience?

- Small size of classes results in different types of activities
- Panel discussions, chatting about reading
- Going to a children’s film festival
- Meet with library staff to learn how to use research tools
- Hands-on projects
 - Zin
- Biology ecology (Dr. Palmer)
 - Towards end of the semester when students are not showing up
 - Instructor shared life stories including failures and successes
 - Showed that the instructor was invested
 - Led to student going to office hours to talk more about his life experiences
 - Took the last day of class to talk about what would come next for students—why are we studying this topic?
 - Let students know that his door is always open—whether they are in the instructor’s class or not
- Wandering into a new major
- Kate Fletcher helps students to apply what they are learning to what they want to do (80 students)
 - Short office visit to support connecting with students
 - Required
 - Passes around sign-up sheet
 - Makes alternate times available as students need them
 - “Get to know you” paper to prepare for session
 - Desired result: students are more comfortable coming in to visit
 - Shows instructor investment in every single students
 - Builds relationship and atmosphere of trust
 - Remembers student faces and interests
 - Helps students hold themselves
- What makes visiting professors during office hours intimidating?
 - Students don’t “know” professor
 - Perception of faculty as “experts” in the field
- Students are very busy studies + work for many of them
 - Flexibility in office hours are appreciated
 - Students don’t know what is available to them
 - Asking for opportunities to re-write, extra time, etc.
- Faculty presence at general campus activities shows that they are interested in students
 - Opportunities to “bond” through field work
- Students really appreciate professors who learn student’s names and use them.

Have classroom experiences been the impetus for change in career path?

- Challenges with time for reflection on why taking the course of study.
 - Figure out what you are passionate about
 - Critically thinking about your end goal
 - Identify dread associated with particular courses.
- Volunteering opportunities helped lead to change in path.
- Classes that have more thought –provoking assignments are helpful
 - Volunteering assignments that send students outside of the classroom
 - Opportunities to explore different options
- Experiential/service learning has a huge impact
 - Can be scary as a freshman, but helps them to visualize where they want to go.
 - The sooner you do that the better

Is traditional lecture necessary anymore?

- It can be helpful to have an instructor “translate” textbook material
- The usefulness of lecture varies according to topic
- Dr. Hyde Art History course management

Unsuccessful “surprises”

- Professors who like to call on students who do not raise their hands (large lecture classes)
 - Makes students feel uncomfortable and dread going to the course
 - Singling students out
 - This tends not to be a problem with a smaller class
- Prefer “facilitation” asking student thoughts rather than looking for a “right or wrong” answer
- A student presentation session that turned into a lecture

An instructor who is having a good time is more likely to lead to students having a good time.

- Faculty sharing their personal story and/or research activities
- Failures as well as successes

Need to allow students opportunities to fail.

How to get students out of their comfort zone.

- Game strategies
- Engage with students on social media to help connection with teacher and other students (tumblr, twitter)

Students can tell if an instructor doesn’t want to be in a classroom.

- Some students may try to make a connection with the professor by going to office hours
 - Many students won’t do this

Can we get Dr. Palmer to do a BTP?

Laptops/Devices in the classroom

- Establish times to close devices to discuss and then go back to the devices to look at the research
- Suggest to students that if they are using a device that they sit in the back or don’t come to class
- Headphones?

- Potential for students to look for connections with the content.

Can we bring in students who are doing less well academically for a future BTP?