RETENTION OF KNOWLEDGE TO

FOSTER CRITICAL THINKING

My Goal

How I achieve my goal

CRAFTING LESSONS AROUND THE CLASS NOT THE SUBJECT

GENUINELY CARE

PUT STUDENTS IN THE DRIVER SEAT

LEARNING STYLES

CUMULATIVE EXAMS

DISCUSSION SESSIONS

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

SAFE SPACE FOR FAILURE

COGNITIVE WRAPPERS

ACTIVITIES

SHARE

TOPIC EXPERTS

Teaching methods inspired by 10 years of experience and Bain’s (2004), *What the best college teacher do* and Bowen’s (2012), *Teaching Naked: How moving technology out of your classroom will improve student learning.*

**Discussion Sessions**- A great way to make material relevant while using research. This technique can be used as part of the lesson or at the end. Let the student do 10-15 minutes of research on a question they have on the new content. Then let them report back to the class. While reading Bowen, *Teaching Naked* I felt a common theme was making great faculty-student interactions. Discussion sessions help students analyze and synthesis new material. It also fosters critical thinking and allows students to take a leadership role in their education. These sessions are informative and enjoyable and create those great interactions Bowen (2012) wants us to have.

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**Cognitive Wrappers**-Taken from Bowen (2012) after each exam I have my students answer these two questions; 1) How do you think you did? 2) Would you have studied the same or differently? This reflection, helps engage self-regulatory learning. These questions never count against them creating a “safe space” for them to share. I write a response back to them and I have noticed that upon passing back their exams the majority flip to the last page to see what I have written.

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**Topic Experts**- In Bowen’s (2012) book, *Teaching Naked* he suggests minor changes in the way a teacher instructs can increase retention. Instead of expecting students to simply read, and look at material have them dig a little deeper. I came up with the concept of a topic expert. I assign a topic to a student before or after a lesson occurs. I have them find something interesting about the topic to share with the class. This can also be used during a lesson when a question is posed. Instead of the instructor answering, have the student find the answer and report back.

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**Cumulative Exams**- This concept came from Bain’s (2004) *What the best college teachers do.* All my tests are cumulative. At first students struggle with this concept. It’s been a great tool for many reasons. I can make sure that content that the class is struggling with is re-assessed. I can also, write a lower level question in an early exam and then raise it to a higher level question to foster critical thinking. Lastly, it prepares the students for the final exam.

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**Safe Space for Failure**- We tell our students “it’s OK to make mistakes” but we then expect students first products to be perfect. Research is pointing to failure as a missed opportunity in the classroom, which can instill richer learning experiences. Giving students the ability to trouble shoot through an activity helps foster grit. Allowing students to re-submit work means more time on the material. Also employers want employees to solve complex problems, this usually doesn’t happen on the first try. Giving students the tools and allowing them to fail and work from their failures is critical.

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**Share**-What makes it worthwhile for them to be here in the classroom? Bowen (2012) claims, the teacher in real time! I share stories from my career, with my students. Some of them are not flattering, but I hope the discussion can be a teachable moment and help them avoid making mistakes that I may have made myself. I also explain to them, *why* we are learning this material and what my thought process was for teaching it a certain way. I ask them for feedback weekly and I receive it. They feel comfortable asking questions and questioning my approach. I appreciate the interactions and discussions.

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**Learning Styles**- All my students take a learning style quiz before our first class. We discuss study techniques and what teaching methods work best for them. Bowen (2012) describes instructors creating a “entry point” to make connections with their students. This is my “entry point” I modify my lessons to student learning styles. It demonstrates my investment in their education and in turn they become more invested in the material.

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**Choose your own Adventure**-I found this inspiration from Bain’s (2010) book in Chapter 2. Putting students in control can help with knowledge retention. A few things I have tried-include presenting the class with a list of objectives and having them vote on the order by which the objectives will be covered. I have also, given them a topic- (i.e. breast cancer) and ask them to write down on a card what they want to know about that topic. I then randomly choose cards and present the information to answer their questions. Finally, I allow them to learn in their preferred learning styles.

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**Activities**- Both books really speak to fostering unique learning opportunities in the class room. I find that activities in the class create healthy discussion between students. They learn from each other and see the content from a different perspective. I try to create activities in a problem based learning format. I also try to connect the activities with their future profession. I have a grading rubric for independent and group work making students aware of the expectations.

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