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Investigating Contemplative Practice in Creative Writing and Education Classes

Description

This presentation will focus on the results of a research project currently underway at University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth (UMD) and Saint Martin's University (SMU). Our primary purpose has been to examine the impact of contemplative practice on teaching and learning in an undergraduate creative writing class and a graduate education methods class on teaching writing. As part of our universities' participation in the CASTL Cognitive/Affective Leadership Program, our project investigates how contemplative practice via reflective writing at the beginning of class informs affective development in student learning, particularly sense of self as writers and as teachers of writing. Secondary purposes of the project are to study the effectiveness of collaborative practice in cognitive affective learning (CAL) and model the changing nature of faculty work in higher education. Underpinning assessment of the project is Krathwohl's Affective Domain. Evidence to be analyzed include student-written reflections around the themes of Writing from the Inside and Writing from the Outside, and emails to and from these students dialoguing on the experiences.

Objectives

1. To report on the results of a study by Maureen Hall at UMD and Olivia Archibald at SMU that investigates the role of contemplative practice in the teaching and learning process.
2. To further develop the body of research on cognitive affective learning that has been initiated by Carnegie's CAL Leadership Program.
3. To consider how quiet reflective writing at the beginning of class impacts teaching and learning, especially with writing prompts that investigate sense of self, sense of self as writer, and sense of self as teacher.

Audience involvement

Audience at our session will do a 10-minute reflective writing assignment, using one of the prompts in our project, then discuss their experiences using questions students used to evaluate their experiences. The remainder of our session will be sharing segments from student-written emails, and, in order to enact the challenge of collaborative inquiry between two faculty 3,000 miles apart, segments from emails between Hall and Archibald. Copies of our paper will be made available at the end of the session.

At the end of the session, attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of the meanings and roles of contemplative practice, reflection, collaboration, and SoTL; with specific CAL assessment models; with the lived experience of shared practices and inquiry in a commons.

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