Encouraging Deep Learning In A Freshman Seminar

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Course Background

Course:
EDC 102H: Introduction to American Education Honors Seminar

Background
• Twenty four (mostly) freshman
• Honors Ss (High GPAs in HS)
• General Education course focusing on Cultural Competence and Information Literacy

Challenge
• Ss prefer strategic to deep learning
• Ss information literacy and digital writing skills often weak despite digital immersion
• Digital natives not yet digital learners

Research Question:
What course elements might increase Ss digital learning skills and commitment to deep learning?

Theoretical Framework
• Deep, Strategic, and Shallow learning (Bain, 2005)
• Personal Digital Inquiry (Coiro etc all, 2016)
• Personal Knowledge Management (Frands & Hixon, 2000)
• Writing that supports critical thinking (Bean, 2011)

Course Changes

Approach:
• Incorporate ideas from writing across curriculum framework and veteran student feedback to increase Ss appreciation of deep learning and improve Ss academic writing.

Course Changes
Supports
• Have class veteran observe how Ss engage in assignments
• Digital learning tools
  • Feedly, Evernote, Zotero
  • Google Apps, Mindmup, etc.

Assignments
• Academic Autobiography
• Learning and Reflection Knowledge Base
• Collaborative or peer edited writing assignments
  • Education Issues Research and Teach-in
  • Take-home midterm
  • In-class final

Results

Reflections from a veteran of the class

• Improve support for
  • Working in teams
  • Academic and reflective writing
  • Sharing inquiry results

Ss reflections: The learner that I want to be:

• "...The type of learner I want to become is one that is always striving to improve even when I feel comfortable in how I’m doing as a student."

• "...I must think more like Shakespeare; I must quit playing the game of school altogether."

• "...If I could alter my learning style from strategic to either a deep learner, or a surface learner, I would not. ... My learning style works for me, so therefore I see no reason to change what is not broken."

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