

LPC Teaching Institute Meeting 9/19/17: Recap and Notes

Improv in the Classroom

Angelo Bummer (English) presented on ways to use improvisation in the classroom. He shared a handout from the AAC&U Annual Meeting (Jan. 2017): "Creating a Learning Ensemble through Applied Improvisation Pedagogy" (Jonathan P. Rossing, Ph.D., Gonzaga University).

- Angelo reviewed the definitions for "learning ensembles" and "applied improvisation" and how each of these might be used as pedagogical techniques. Corporations (e.g. Google, Adidas) and schools have adopted these techniques to help foster confidence and community, group trust, and shared responsibility in employees and students.
- He commented on his firsthand experience trying out improve techniques in his classroom, saying that it helps students get to know each other quickly, helps the teacher know students' names more quickly, helps students with focusing and careful listening, and helps everyone feel more comfortable and confident in collaborating in a classroom.
- We all joined Angelo in several fun exercises to put this pedagogy into practice.:
 - Collective Naming
 - Count to 20
 - Word at a Time
 - 7 Things (or 3, or 5)
 - Zip, Zap, Zop
 - Yes, and...
 - Last Word, First Word
 - Story Spine
 - etc.
- We discussed the pros/cons of the following and ways these exercises might be adapted for each of our subject areas. We also explored some issues that might come up when implementing this pedagogy. How to use this pedagogy in an online/DE environment? How to deal with resistant students?

Great Teachers Seminar Tips

Kali Rippel (Library) presented on her experience at this past summer's Great Teachers Seminar in Santa Barbara and shared some of the teaching techniques she learned while there.

- The seminar promoted the teaching of soft skills and modeling listening/eye contact/speaking, etc. Kali highlighted the themes of the seminar: 1. Do one or two things really well. 2. Be more of a facilitator than teacher. 3. Create learning experiences. 4. Tell stories. 5. Have fun!
- She then led us in a few fun group activities:
 - Google Yourself – used in stages to effectively introduce online searching
 - Squat Challenge – used to overcome obstacles and challenges (Steve Chiolis did it!)
 - Cotton Ball Activity – used to show students how our brains learn and emphasize practical learning for enhanced memory and performance (After a quick debriefing on brain function and neural plasticity, we all participated in this hands-on activity!)
 - Rainforest activity – builds group collaborative skills and also reduces stress (This was a nice way to end the evening!)