How Teaching in Prison Helped My Teaching at Pitt: Principles of Practice

with faculty from The Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences

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1. Mirroring is important, especially for students who are unconfident or unsure how their work will be received.

2. It may require powerful pedagogical interventions to get students to take charge of their own learning (institutional authority in the service of bracketing institutional authority. . . )

3. Creating spaces in higher education in which students can bring projects that are meaningful to them is important.

4. Importance of creating a positive classroom environment
   - Don’t overprepare/overmoderate
   - Don’t underestimate your students

5. Use of statistics: One-page of essential information to frame the discussion
   - Have students read statistics out loud; become very powerful
   - Ask students about biggest surprises, most shocking information, etc.

6. Allow ample class time for group projects.
   - Decreases free-riding
   - Allows instructors to advise all groups
   - Empowers all students
**Assignment Examples**

Re-Imagining the Statue of Liberty

*Ask students to evaluate or re-design a shared ideograph or symbol.*
*Ask students to share both product and process.*
*Encourage co-construction of values and meaning of shared narratives or icons.*

Case Study Group Presentations

*Pair students in ways that address balance of representation*
*Define roles and responsibilities*
*Explore issues of access and personalize objectives*

Close Reading Discussions

*Bring readings to classroom*
*Allow time for individual review and consideration*
*Plan round robin or small group discussions with guidance through readings*

Resistance Thinking and Writing

*Ask students to identify and communicate critical stances on civic participation*
*Ask students to think together about reinvention of those stances*
*Discuss ways in which students can effectively perform rhetorical positions*

**Further Reading** *Many of these are available electronically, please see our site for links.*


