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THE DESIRE 'NOT TO KNOW' AS A CHALLENGE TO TEACHING

Teachers usually imagine that they teach students who want to learn. Often students do want to learn, sometimes don't. Students bring to the classroom a rich and diverse array of prior experiences, values, thoughts, ideas and cherished beliefs. We teach our subject, but we understand that what we teach can conflict with what students want to believe. A thought a teacher wants to teach doesn't, by itself, do the work of thinking. Stating a sentence repeatedly doesn't encourage a student to take in the thought of the sentence. Thinking is work. But the work of thought is in the complex resituating of the thought over time in propitious contexts that can make the emergent thought possible and meaningful. This complex resituating of thought in new contexts is part of a creative work of teaching, and there is no substitute for it. You cannot drive a thought into the mind of a thinker. You must allow and encourage minds to do their own proper work of contextual assimilation as numerous changing contexts for thought allow an anxious thought to become drained of its attendant anxiety.

There are recommendations for educators that may help you encourage students to study and be more attentive. They are as follows:

1. Vary the type and technology used. Students prefer moderate use of technology in the classroom; in fact, the actual use of technology is not as important as the activity the technology allows students to do. Use different tools such as PowerPoint presentations, social networks, podcasts, streaming videos, blogs, virtual games, video clips, etc. Educators should balance the use of technology in classes with other activities such as lectures, guest speakers, group assignments, interactive and hands-on activities, and class discussions.

2. Consider assignments that involve volunteering, environmental causes, fund raising, other civic duties will help satisfy their need to be socially responsible and allow them to feel they can contribute value and meaning through their education. Suggest assigning peer reviewed projects to get the students involved with more team collaboration.

3. Use stimulations when appropriate. A stimulation allows student to be more actively engaged and in greater of their own learning.

4. Provide as much feedback as possible. To satisfy students` need for instant gratification, timely feedback on assignments and exams is necessary. Students appreciate praise and recognition; although verbal praise would be sufficient, educators could also give prizes (candy, one-time-only pop quiz exemption) for exemplary work on a project or exam.

5. Keep the atmosphere in the classroom relaxed. This will not only help students feel comfortable, it will also help garner more participation in class discussions.

6. Provide options when appropriate. For example, appeal to the students` preference for flexibility, having students vote on a deadline could help them feel more empowered when it comes to their schedules. Additionally, giving them a list of possible dates and having them choose the date they want to do a group presentation.

7. Involve their parents. For example, students could conduct an interview with a parent or guardians about topics related to the class (such as “How is economy affecting your family?”) and write a paper about it.

8. Be prepared to adjust with the generation as many professors have done for previous generations. If the students seem no to be engaging as hoped or assessments show they are not mastering the content, more adaptations to delivery and methodology will be necessary. Remember: more than anything, these students expect not only expertise but also passion in the subject area from their teachers.