2023 Student Success Conference

The Power of Agency

Voice, Choice, and Student Success
From a humble beginning...
UI’s Annual Student Success Conference brings faculty, staff, and students together to address critical issues affecting the student experience. Every year we collaboratively identify, share, and develop strategies to remove barriers to student success. This year, our focus is on student agency. Together we will explore strategies for understanding and enhancing student agency, voice, and choice. Our approach is to share success stories as well as mile-markers, and to hear from and build on the words and experiences of our faculty, staff, and students. Our goal is for everyone to leave with new partnerships and a blueprint for change.
# Session 1: The Meaning and Value of Agency

## Exercise 1: Think, Pair, Share

**Prompt:**
1. What does student agency mean to you?
2. Why does it matter?
3. How does “voice and choice” fit in?
4. How do you, in your role, support or promote agency?

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Agency, Voice, and Choice

• When we talk about agency, we often talk about taking control of something, or at least having a say in it.
• How does this apply to teaching, learning, and support?
  • It empowers students to have a say.
• Specifically, student agency refers to learning through activities that are meaningful and relevant to the students. Learning therefore has value to students and can be driven by their interests.
• There is at least a modicum of decisional autonomy: students have a voice and a choice in their learning.
• How do we foster agency without losing control?
• Consider:
  • UDL
  • Equity Frame
  • Opportunities to co-create knowledge and even the class
Threshold Concepts

- **Transformative**
  - Once they’re understood, they change the way a student views a subject.
  - A new lens for thinking.

- **Troublesome**
  - Sometimes they’re counterintuitive, strange, and complex.
  - Meaning is not immediately obvious.

- **Integrative**
  - They bring together different pieces of the puzzle – different aspects of a subject – that may not have appeared to be related.
Session 2: Challenge

Exercise 2: Identifying, Understanding, and Addressing Challenges

Prompt:
- Think about “one big thing” essential to your work, your field, and student success and identify...

1. A critical concept or skill that you have struggled to...
   - Learn (Students?)
   - Teach (Faculty?)
   - Support (Staff?)

2. What’s one thing that worked to get through, master, or support the development of that concept or skill?

3. What’s one thing you learned from someone at your table about overcoming that challenge?

4. How can you work together to help one another better understand, support, and overcome such challenges?

Show your work/share your ideas
**Session 3: The Productive Struggle**

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<th>Exercise 3: Discussion &amp; Collaboration</th>
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<td><strong>Prompt:</strong></td>
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<td>1. How do we help students embrace and work through the productive struggle of learning?</td>
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<td>2. How do we help students, and how can we, master key concepts, essential skills, and learning processes?</td>
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<td>3. How can we help our students become persistent, metacognitive, and self-regulated learners?</td>
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<td>4. How can an equity frame support student success?</td>
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The Value of Critical Reflection, and...

• Critical Reflection is the “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends”.

• It involves “thinking about our thinking” (John Dewey, *How we Think*).
Linking Critical Reflection, Metacognition, and Self-Regulated Learning

The monitoring and managing of one’s cognitive processes as well as the awareness of and control over one’s emotions, motivations, behaviors, and environment as related to learning.

Conscious control over one’s cognitive processes
A Blueprint For Change
Thank You!
Resources

Information, Tips, and Techniques
For all session materials, “share-outs”, and past event findings, please visit our Student Success Conference Page
What Can I do? General Advice

Get students to understand how they approach their work—ask them to think about it!

Give them a chance to do something with your feedback...and their own. Fold it into graded work!

Ask your students to write down the things they know or fear might have an impact on their academic performance.

If you teach a class that has a reputation for being particularly hard, has a high DFW rate, is way larger than it should be, etc: talk about it and what you—and they—can do to increase the odds of success.

Remember: We have a diverse learner population. Many are learning unfamiliar topics in unfamiliar ways. It is easy for them to become overwhelmed and shut down or withdraw. There are things going on in their lives that we don’t know about. They’re human. So are we. We can help them learn the value of managing their time, emotions, distractions, and well-being.
What Every Student Can/Should Do: Four Steps to Self-Regulated Learning

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<tr>
<th>Step 1: Make a plan</th>
<th>Step 2: Monitor performance</th>
<th>Step 3: Reflect on performance</th>
<th>Step 4: Use results to improve their process</th>
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<td>• Identify goals;</td>
<td>• “Today I will___”;</td>
<td>• Students must reflect on their work and final product —what they did, how they did it, how well they did (the grade), and how well their plan and strategies worked.</td>
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<td>• Map out a strategy and timeline to accomplish them;</td>
<td>• “Today I did (or did not) ____”</td>
<td>• They must think outside the box of “it is not written well enough” or “well, I did my best” and “I guess I bombed that one!” Think about why...</td>
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<td>• Identify potential obstacles —self-awareness is critical!— and how to address/overcome them.</td>
<td>• “When I _____, I _____”</td>
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<td>• “An option might be to ____”</td>
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What else?
Easy to Use Activities and Assignments

- “Chunk” information
- Think-Pair-Share
- Reading & discussion reflections
- Ticket out the door
- Quick writes
- Wrappers
- Learning Journals
- Simulations
DEAL with it

**DESCRIBE** the learning experience.

Think:
- What?
- Where?
- Who?
- When?
- Why

EXAMINE the experience through the lens of academic concepts, theories, or strategies
EG: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, UDL, Course Learning Goals

ARTICULATE LEARNING by discussing and explaining what you learned, when you learned it, how you learned it and why it is important – to you and the field! -- and what you can/will do differently because of it.

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**Schematic Overview of the DEAL Model for Critical Reflection**

- **2. Examine** experience per reflection prompts by category of learning goal:
  - **Personal Growth Category**: Sample prompt excerpts: Your strengths, weaknesses, skills, assumptions, etc. that emerged?
    - Effect on service recipients?
    - Need to change? How?
  - **Civic Engagement Category**: Sample prompt excerpts: Trying to accomplish what?
    - Approach taken? Why?
    - Need to change to more systemic approach? How?
  - **Academic Enhancement Category**: Sample prompt excerpts:
    - Academic concept that applies?
    - Same/different from experience? Why?
    - Need to rethink concept? How?
- **3. Articulate Learning**
  - What did I learn?
  - How did I learn it?
  - Why is it important?
  - What will I do because of it?

Consider Using this Cognitive (and Non-Cognitive) Wrapper Template

**COGNITIVE WRAPPERS TEMPLATE**

This template was designed to help students better understand their own learning—what’s working, what’s not, and why...and what they/we can do about it.

Note that it emphasizes REFLECTION, FEEDBACK, and ADJUSTMENTS

**REFLECTION**

1. **How much total time** did you spend preparing for/working on this assignment or project?
2. **When** did you prepare for/work on it? How did you spread out your preparation? USE TIME LINE TOOL: [https://timeline.knightlab.com/](https://timeline.knightlab.com/). Can be used for collaborative projects.
3. Did you make time for thinking and reflecting? If so, when, how much, and what breakthroughs? Remember the 5 day rule.
4. **How** did you prepare?
5. How much time was spent:
   a. Conducting research? 
      i. Did you work with a librarian? 
   b. Reading course material 
   c. Re-reading course material 
   d. Working independently 
   e. Working in groups 
   f. Pausing 
   g. Thinking 
   h. Reflecting 
   i. Note taking 
   j. Drafting 
   k. Editing 
   l. Problem solving 
   m. Memorizing 
   n. Brainstorming 
   o. Practicing 
   p. Other 

**USING FEEDBACK**

- First, **GIVE GOOD FEEDBACK**.
- This can come in a variety of forms—what do you do?
- It can come from other sources, like their peers.

**Based on the feedback,**

- What went well/what’s working?
- What went wrong/what kind of mistakes did you make?
- When you review the feedback, do you think that you lost points because of 
  - Trouble understanding the instructions/assignment? (Lack of clarity or direction/misunderstanding; unclear expectations)
  - Trouble understanding concepts
  - Trouble understanding or remembering processes or techniques
  - Misapplication of techniques? (doing the wrong thing the right way)
  - Carelessness
  - Lack of preparation in class or on your own
  - Time limits/management/not enough time given (explain)
  - Frustration / anxiety
  - Trouble with format / assignment type (eg, writing, problem solving, collaborative, performative)
  - Other?

**ADJUSTMENTS**

1. Name at least three things you can/will do differently next time.
2. Assess if these changes work.
3. What will help you learn or demonstrate your knowledge or ability most effectively?
4. Propose alternative formats?