Facilitation of Critical Dialogue in Higher Education

Research Question: How do university faculty facilitate a critical dialogue in higher education, particularly in a large classroom (lecture hall) setting?

Terminology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Meta-synthesis</td>
<td>Process whereby the researcher sifts through relevant data to discover themes and patterns among various sources (refer to methods section)</td>
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<td>Apathy</td>
<td>Student shows lack of concern, interest, and/or enthusiasm for material</td>
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<td>Intersectionalities</td>
<td>The interconnectedness of individual characteristics and demographics (e.g. race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age) as they contribute to one’s sense of identity</td>
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Objectives

1. Engage in a meta-synthesis to collect data about apathetic students and their lack of engagement in critical discussion
2. Engage in coding process whereby themes are solidified according to quantity and emphasis across numerous peer-reviewed journal articles
3. Create a tri-fold pamphlet for professionals that describes practices/strategies empirically supported to facilitate quality critical dialogue in higher education

Methods

• Collection of peer-reviewed journal articles that address student engagement in discussion in higher education (keywords: “apathy/apathetic”, “critical dialogue”, “critical discussion”, “lecture hall”)
• Solidification of specific words/terminology repeated and emphasized within numerous articles selected
• Further solidification of repeated concepts via application of grouping techniques based upon themes/contingencies of context within numerous articles selected
• Application of specific insights, examples, and content as they pertain to themes discovered

“A belief in the entitlement of learners to freedom and equality would necessitate an approach to the curriculum, which encourages autonomy and fosters critical engagement with content, as these are pre-requisites to enabling learners to empower themselves” (Mohamed Moustakim, 2007)

Results

Intersectionalities
- Individual differences, demographics, climate, characteristics, vulnerabilities, learning/teaching styles, empowerment
- Engagement of different types of learners and personalities
- Acknowledgement of salient engagement

Conduct
- Collaborative, small-group, challenge, scaffold, analysis, interaction
- Lesson structure with “interactive windows”

Medium
- Prompt, video, critical discussion, critical dialogue, content, material
- Pre-lecture [required] material

Delivery
- Power dynamic, reciprocity, attitude, passive, goals, objectives, behavior, intimidation, authority, ignorance, bias, neutrality
- Open-ended prompts
- Building upon and challenging responses

Reaction
- Autonomy, apathy, retention, self-esteem, self-concept, learning, engagement, interest
- Respect for differing perspectives
- Higher-order learning

Conclusions

1. Discussion prompts will differ every time they are administered (due to differing perspectives of variant audiences)
2. Students’ self-esteem indicates their level of engagement
3. Critical discussion improves student retention of material/content (i.e. “immediately accessible settings”)
4. The structure of a linear lecture hall is intimidating for students