CFP: Why Writing Matters?: Articulating the Value of Writing to Students, Administrators, and Faculty From Across the Disciplines

Dates: Friday, October 19 and Saturday, October 20, 2017

Location: Farmingdale State College, Farmingdale, NY

Presentation Format: Roundtable Discussion /Seminar

Great writing reflects passion and creativity. A blank page is a canvas for creative thinking and cognitive development. Great writers possess a desire to understand the value and meaning of text presented in the world they live in. Great writers possess a desire to create a masterpiece based on innovation, analysis and individual interpretation.

"Deep Learning" Through Socratic Seminar: *Reflexivity In The First Year Writing Classroom* – J. Mignano-Brady

Socratic Seminar is explored as one of the more authentic and profound ways to facilitate critical thinking in a writing classroom. This best practice explores the concept of reflexivity through conversation and critical thinking in response to a variety of texts amongst a diverse student population. Deep learning is achieved by delving into Socratic Seminar as a "method to enhance and contextualize information that will later translate into a meaningful rhetoric. This includes conversation and writing. Socratic Seminar, also known as "fishbowl" intends to foster dialectic in class by interpreting a specific text (s)" and is reinforced by adding multi-disciplinary methods of learning. Deep learning and critical thinking take place through "reflexivity" to create an authentic discourse on a multitude of levels.

"Fishbowl" strengthens teacher pedagogy and student retention. Good Writing is achieved by creating a "conversation" using "accountable talk". Students become critical thinkers with enhanced academic literacy and a deeper understanding of the text. "Deep learning" and reflexive reading is teacher facilitated and student centered. Seminar engages students to continue the conversation by discussing concepts in class conducive to research outside class and publishing formal writing pieces. In essence, it builds strong participation and relationships amongst participants who strive to extrapolate and synthesize complex ideas. Reflexive reading fosters authentic and valuable interpretation by providing first year writing students with sound ideas that can later translate into meaningful and authentic low stakes and formal writing pieces. Students begin to see the value in learning the text. They develop a desire to extrapolate, contextualize and correlate ideas by juxtaposing concepts outside the writing classroom.

Socratic Seminar fosters authentic learning alongside a desire to contextualize. Teacher generated assignments reflect "deep learning" and engage first year writing students.

“Fishbowl” creates the conversation, deepens the value of the text, and speaks to a variety of learners in a diverse classroom setting (deep learning). Lesson plans and assignments that promote “deep learning” in a classroom Seminar will translate into meaningful published writing responses.

This deep approach to learning is student centered and teacher facilitated. It’s accompanied by creative learning activities to enrich and promote critical thought. Teacher preparation and participation is paramount in order to achieve success in Socratic Seminar. Both discourse and engagement is viable throughout the semester. Pedagogical insight helps to create and implement a variety of complex texts and help answer essential questions in seminar. It is achieved through active reading and writing assignments, scaffolding, and research in an ongoing published writing forum (Blogging).

Students are motivated to derive meaning and contextualize many concepts presented. They see the intellectual benefits of understanding the text and the writing reflects meaning. They strive to enhance their vocabulary and provide a creative analysis based on ideas presented in Seminar. Reflexive reading and good writing is modeled and developed as students delve into writing assignments that will later prepare them for critical thought and development in seminar and formal writing. Deep learning through conversation promotes growth, profound insight and academic literacy in the writing classroom. Socratic Seminar brings forth purpose for reading and writing in both realms.

Kuh, Shoup and Laird in their NSSE presentation titled *Deep Approaches to Learning (2005)* , assert that a “deep learning is integrating and synthesizing information with prior learning in ways that become part of one’s thinking and approaching new phenomena and efforts to see things from different perspectives (qtd. Ramsden, 2003; Tagg, 2003). “Deep learning is learning that takes root in our apparatus of understanding, in the embedded meanings that define us and that we use to define the world” (p. 4).

Quintessentially, the practice of Socratic Seminar in pedagogy is the practice of engaging students in an ongoing conversation and as a result reflexivity occurs simultaneously. It’s valued by all members of the classroom and creates value in learning and writing. “Fishbowl” is both student and teacher inspired.

Nelson-Laird, T., Shoup, R., & Kuh, G.D. (2005) Measuring Deep Approaches to Learning Using the National Survey of Student Engagment.1-28.