



The Center for Intercultural Learning and Teaching

What We Learned in Previous Years: (Peter Frederick, Mary James, & Ed Rousculp)

As a result of classroom visits, formal workshop and informal conversations with faculty throughout the year, we learned that learning and teaching at Heritage is strong. Indeed, most of the findings of an NCAT study, “Increasing Success for Underserved Students,” (see summary on back) are already being implemented by a Heritage Faculty that fully embraces the Heritage mission and vision in creative, hard-working ways. For example:

1. The careful statements and clarity of learning goals and outcomes
 2. The use of a wide variety of interactive and inclusive learning activities: for example, small group collaborative work along with individualized attention, posters, story-boards, stories, creative, useful art and laboratory projects and experiments, mini-lectures, restrained and effective use of technology, use of textbook visual materials, diagramming, cognitive mapping, and other graphic aids to learning, rigorous close analysis of both printed and visual “texts,” frequent feedback, authentic, performance-based assessment, and other effective pedagogies
 3. The choice of appropriate textbooks, readings and laboratory experiments
 4. The rigorous pushing of students to do the epistemological work of the discipline rather than merely rote learning about it
 5. The service learning/civic engagement/practical application of disciplinary learning to the education, business, health and social needs of local communities and to the natural resources of the Yakima/Yakama area
 6. The integration of multicultural awareness and intercultural competencies as a natural, normal part of courses in all programs and disciplines
 7. The widespread awareness of differing learning styles and the ability to teach important and difficult concepts and theories in multiple ways: hear it, see it, say it, do it, do it in groups, do it yourself
 8. The positive, supportive, caring, encouraging, affirming –yet rigorous and challenging—approach Heritage faculty have toward their students
 9. The energy, humor, and generous spirit of the faculty.
- B. That said, we have noted the following, persisting, recurring issues and challenges of helping Heritage students successfully achieve our learning outcomes. (Note: these concerns are not unique to Heritage --though there are local exacerbating factors-- but are experienced throughout American higher education):
1. Student academic preparation: the level of reading, writing, quantitative and motivational skills, which pressures us to adapt our standards
 2. The need for even more frequent reiteration and enforcement of learning expectations and outcomes, connecting our learning goals to students’ prior experience, and continuously monitoring student learning through multiple means of classroom assessment

3. Helping students see the meaning and purpose of our assignments, and helping them construct meaning for themselves
4. The challenge of involving all students in classroom or online discussions, and of sustaining discussions and group work when they lag
5. Lax attendance, lateness to class and, for some, incivility behavior issues
6. The need to inculcate rigorously in our students a sense of responsibility for their own learning (including better attendance), and for faculty to take a more tough-love, supportive (challenging and rigorous) stance toward our students, despite their daily life difficulties
7. Some tensions (both perceived and real) among age cohorts and among the diverse ethnicities in our classes – white Anglos included
8. Connecting and contextualizing course units and courses themselves into larger general education and program goals; helping students to see larger themes, concepts, conceptual frameworks, and overviews (Sheila Tobias)
9. Taking time for reflection (for ourselves as well as for our students)

Brief Summary: “*Increasing Success for Underserved Students*” (2005)

A Report by Carol A. Twigg of NCAT (National Center for Academic Transformation) of a study of the successful impact of Redesigning Introductory Courses on the success of adult students, students of color, and low-income students in mostly large institutions

Learning improved (as measured by test scores, course grades, course completion, and retention) among these students as a result of:

1. More active learning and greater student engagement with course materials
2. Students doing rather than listening
3. Increased student interaction: small-group, in-classroom learning activities
4. Online (and classroom) interactive tutorials, exercises, low-stakes quizzes and other means of practicing and getting feedback on important course concepts
5. Mastery learning by offering flexibility (but not self-paced) in how students engaged and mastered learning objectives (e.g., scheduled times for completion)
6. Individualized, on-demand help through an expanded support system including peer tutors and mentors, study and learning support groups, GTAs, etc.
7. Continuous assessment and feedback of repeated practice of skills and learning
8. An early alert intervention system to catch students falling behind

And all at lower costs (mainly by transferring personnel time to technology and ULAs).

Reminder: The “*Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*” (A. Chickering & Z. Gamson (1987), include:

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| 1. Active Learning/Involvement | 5. Prompt Feedback |
| 2. Cooperative Learning | 6. Student/Faculty Contact |
| 3. Respect for Diversity | 7. Time on Task (practicing skills) |
| 4. High Expectations | |