INTERACTION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING

The first two interactions asked you to think about your teaching as it is designed and proposed (through the syllabus) and conducted (through structured procedures and methods). The conceptions and actions of teachers are, of course, not the complete picture – effective teaching is also intrinsically tied to student learning. The third interaction thus focuses on *documenting* evidence of student learning/understanding/ performance and *reflecting* upon it with respect to achieving your overall teaching goals and objectives.

Collecting Student Work:

Throughout the semester, collect samples of student work into an archive. Keep at least two examples of high, medium, and low passes for all major assignments, as well as any minor assignments you think you might want to include. Consider whether you want to track a few students through each assignment – if so, collect accordingly.

Remember: it is almost impossible to reconstruct this archive later. Keep copies of stuff as you go. You'll be glad you did.

Selecting your samples:

Near the end of the semester, select up to *three* of your assignments (e.g. papers, tests, projects, documented performances, homework assignments) from your course that you want to analyze fully in the portfolio.

Reflection Memo:

Discuss how well your students have met the activity's objectives based on the evidence from the student work you collected. There are a variety of ways you might measure student learning – you could identify representative examples of high, medium, low passing work, and connect that with the overall performance of the class; you could focus on selected questions or activities that you feel represent 'higher order' thinking or learning; you could focus on a few students and track their progress over the course of the semester.

- is there evidence (as represented in your work samples) that students are meeting the specific learning goals you designed the assignment to assess?
- what criteria are you using to assess such understanding?
- what differentiates high/medium/low accomplishment in the assignment?
- how do the criteria for the assignment relate to the intellectual goals you have set for the class?
- does performance in these activities indicate that students have developed an understanding of your field that will be retained and/or that can be applied to other contexts? how so?

- based on their work in this activity, are students learning ideas and/or skills that are central to the course and your teaching goals?
- do their performances in this activity reveal misunderstandings or confusions about the assignment itself?
- do their performances in this activity reveal misunderstandings or confusions about the ideas and/or skills that are central to the course and your teaching goals?
- what is the overall range of student performance in this activity? (how many students did well, acceptably, badly…) How do you account for this range? Are you satisfied with it?
- did the student performance that you have documented meet your expectations? why or why not?
- how does their achievement of the goals of this assignment relate to the goals of your department's curriculum or the university's student learning objectives?
- what changes (if any) do you plan to make to this assignment, or the way you teach in preparation for this assignment, in the future? how do you think those changes will improve student learning?

Discussion:

After exchanging Reflection Memos with your partner and mentor (cc'ing the program coordinator), the three of you should meet to discuss student learning and its assessment.
- what insight/s did you gain about your own assignments and student learning by writing the reflection memo?
- what insight/s did you gain from reading your partner's?
- are the criteria for judging student performance related to the instructor's goals for the assignment and for the course?
- how clear are those criteria, and those linkages, to students?
- what are the advantages and disadvantages of using student learning performance as a way to evaluate teaching (in comparison, for example, to student evaluations)?
- how would you combine student performance with intellectual content and teaching practices to offer a complete/useful/appropriate picture of your students' experiences in your class?

Follow-up Memos:

Write a brief memo to your partner (cc'ing your mentor and the program coordinator) reflecting on your conversation, and discussing any changes you plan to make to your teaching, class activities, or assignments as a result of this conversation.