

Using Tough Empathy Pedagogy to Motivate Students

ELITE / MCIW Professional Day Conference
August 21, 2018

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Definitions

- Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) – an educational practice of using information about students' backgrounds to **tailor instruction that will improve their success**
- Tough empathy pedagogy (TEP) – an educational practice that requires instructors to imagine and feel the emotions of their students, communicate about various resources and support, and to **teach and mentor using this perspective**

Empathy vs. Sympathy

- “When we listen to students – really listen – and learn about their misunderstandings, fears, and hopes, we are better at anticipating their needs and providing meaningful supports.”
(David J. Kimball, 2016)
- Empathy is NOT the same as sympathy (Dr. Brene Brown, 2017)
 - Ability to take other person’s perspective
 - Stay away from judgment
 - Recognize emotion in others
 - Communicate how to help others

Isn't "tough empathy" an oxymoron?

- Easy on the student, tough on the problem
- Give the students what they **NEED**, not what they want
 - Financial aid (e.g., Z courses, scholarships)
 - Mandatory and intrusive advising
 - Developmental education redesign
 - Embedded coaches in the classroom
 - Food banks or mobile markets
 - Others?

Why TEP?

- MC is an Achieving the Dream institution accredited by Middle States guided by MC 2020, AMP, and StAMP
 - Focus is on social justice, radical inclusion, equity
- *The Student Voice Report* – from the Fall Opening Meeting 2016
 - “[Student] felt uncomfortable asking questions. Professor made her feel bad for asking questions.”
 - “MC has excellent student services. [Faculty] need to encourage more students to take advantage of them.”

Guidelines of Implementing TEP

- Hold expectations high
- Listen to students with a desire to understand, not ridicule
- Never give up on students

Student Success Strategies of TEP

- Mentor / advise students inside and outside of the classroom
- Refer to students to various support services at the College (e.g., counseling, DSS, financial aid, learning centers, mobile markets)
- Assign appropriate course activities that will create equitable and inclusive outcomes (examples on next pages)

Pedagogical Strategies of TEP

- Social justice assignments – Get students to become social agents of change through a connection of course material and community engagement activities
 - Internships
 - Service learning or community outreach assignments
 - Example: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Open Pedagogy Faculty Fellowship

Pedagogical Strategies of TEP

- Integrative learning assignments – Get students to think across disciplines so they understand how things are related
 - Connected multi-disciplinary thinking
 - Problem solving from multiple perspectives
 - Deepened understanding of multiple disciplines
 - Example: Integrative Learning Field Guide

Pedagogical Strategies of TEP

- Meta-cognitive self-reflective task-oriented assignments – Get students to evaluate their learning techniques
 - Written communication
 - Oral communication
 - Comprehension
 - Memorization
 - Critical thinking
 - Example: General Education signature assignments

Pedagogical Strategies of TEP

- Group leadership activities – Assign students a role and hold them accountable for carrying out appropriate responsibilities
 - Facilitator
 - Scribe
 - Reporter
 - Timekeeper
 - Checker

Empathy Knows No Boundaries

- If executed correctly, TEP can cause your students to have empathy for others
 - “Every Kid Needs a Champion” (Rita Pierson)
 - “No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship.”
- Let’s be EASY on the student, but TOUGH on the problem

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