

Getting To Know Your Classroom Climate

JMU Center for Faculty Innovation
Faculty Workshop Series 2010-2011
Morgan Benton and Laura Haas

Millennial Connections

- * A Madison Teaching Fellows team comprised of:
 - * Bob Brown (Religion)
 - * Laura Haas (CAP)
 - * Morgan Benton (ISAT)
- * Our task:
 - * Who are “millennials” and how should we think about modifying our teaching in ways that allow us to make genuine and effective connections with them?

Who are Millennials?

One view:

“Millennials view higher education as an expensive but economically necessary consumer good, not a privilege earned by hard work and outstanding performance. They (or their parents) “purchase” it for the instrumental purpose of opening well-paying occupational doors on graduation, so they feel entitled to their degree for the cost of the credits.”

--Linda B. Nelson

Teaching at its Best: A Research-Based Resource for College Instructors

Jossey-Bass 2010

Student Development Theory

- * Being good company (Baxter Magolda, 2001)
 - * Students' development is a journey from a dichotomous worldview (right and wrong) to a contextual, self-authored one
 - * Three components to educational practice of good companionship:
 - * Validating students as knowers
 - * Situating learning in students' experience
 - * Mutually constructing meaning

Motivation Theories

- * Expectancy-Value Theory

$$M = E * V$$

- * Self-Determination Theory

- * Relatedness
- * Autonomy
- * Competence

Our experiences...

- * What worked well...
 - * Survey elicited some great responses!
 - * Contradicting information told interesting stories (question regarding a powerful learning experience vs. preferred instruction methods)
 - * Asking questions about things outside the classroom
 - * General questions mixed with discipline-specific questions

Our experiences...

- What didn't work so well...
 - Some questions poorly worded:
 - What, if any, usefulness will this class have to your major, or to your long-term goals?
 - Got a lot of answers like “not much” (this was for a GenEd class)
 - This class would end up being satisfying for you if...
 - Most students answered with some variance of “if I got a good grade”
 - How do you think your strengths might help the rest of the class?
 - Very vague question, students' responses were all over the place
 - Where would you like to improve most as a student/What class activities would help you make real improvement in this area?
 - Was a bit redundant of another question that asked what sorts of learning styles they preferred—felt the other question gave better insights into students' preferred learning styles

Data

- High response rate... above 80% for all of us
- Thoughtful responses from students... they seemed to treat it like their first assignment
- Enabled us to feel more familiar with students; students seemed to be more comfortable with us
- Gave us some “heads up” on what students we might need to keep an extra eye on
 - students who disclosed certain kinds of information
 - students who didn’t seem to give much thought to their responses

Our experiences...

- * What we learned
 - * Sense of community in the classroom increased
 - * Students more comfortable with us
 - * Students more willing to participate in class discussions

Tips and Tricks

- * What survey options do you have?
 - * Qualtrics is very easy, user-friendly, but email would work just fine as well
 - * Upcoming Qualtrics workshops: October 11 and November 4; signup through CIT
- * When should you send your survey?
 - * As close to beginning of class as possible
 - * Letting students know that you're using this to shape the learning environment is key

Who are you?

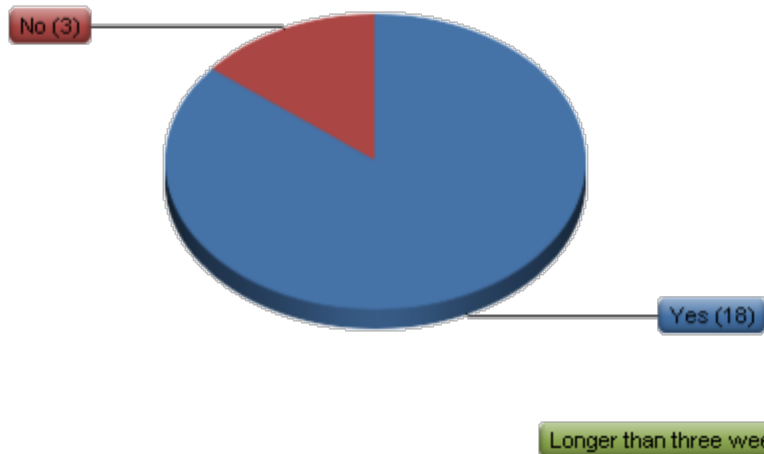
What you teach

- * Kinesiology
- * Management
- * Biology
- * Psychology
- * Statistics
- * Sports Management
- * Communication
- * History
- * Nursing
- * Computer Science
- * Religion & Philosophy
- * Career and Life Planning
- * Education
- * Chemistry
- * Occupational Therapy
- * Writing
- * Justice Studies
- * Biotechnology
- * Costume Design
- * Reading

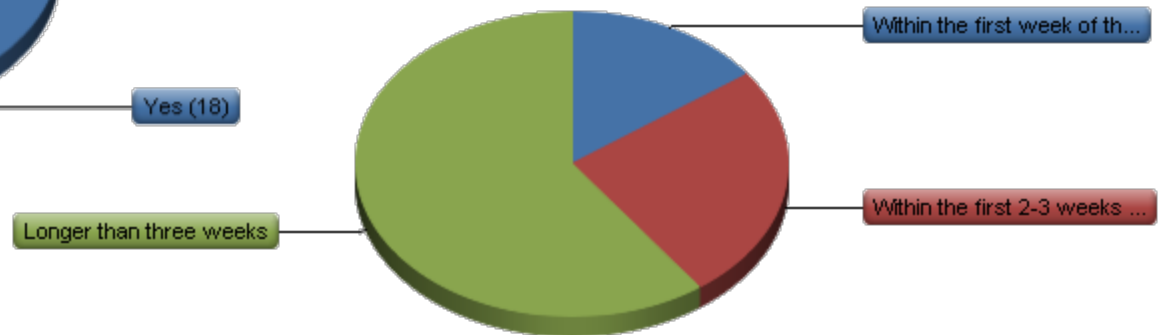
Who are you?

Learning Names

- * Do you learn all or most of your students' names?



- * About how long does it take you to learn them?



Who are you?

Life Plans

- * Student affairs
- * Teaching fitness
- * Bed and Breakfast
- * Have kids who 'pay it forward'
- * Teaching! Teaching! Teaching!
- * Tenure
- * Teaching past retirement
- * Missionary work
- * Teaching chemistry
- * Research
- * Contributing to my profession
- * Travel
- * Freelance design
- * Living by the lake

Who are you?

Role of Connecting with Students

- * We may be co-workers some day...
- * I want students to refer my class to other students
- * Students become adults. Never know what role they may play
- * Students are my collaborators
- * Substantial. It's why I came to full-time academia
- * Students are fellow citizens who'll run the world when I retire
- * Want to be more involved with students... see them mature
- * Essential... as self-advocates, they tell us what works
- * Want students to form lasting professional ties with JMU
- * I live on it. It's why I teach.
- * I love visiting students in different parts of the world
- * They remind me of the wonder of why I got into this field to begin with
- * Best part of my job. It teaches me about myself.
- * If I could do this, I could teach better, but the large numbers make it difficult.

Who are you?

Losing Track of Time

- * Reading*****
- * Biking
- * Watching football
- * Running
- * Hiking*
- * Fishing
- * Creating*
- * Writing*
- * Tinkering
- * Listening to music

- * Music history
- * Playing music/singing
- * Playing with my kids
- * Camping
- * Research/In the lab*
- * Nothing past 3 hours
- * Administrative stuff
- * Costume design
- * Sketching
- * Programming

Who are you?

Courses you were surprised to love

- * Creativity and innovation
- * Molecular biology
- * PhD-level research
- * Shakespeare
- * Intro to Rhetoric
- * Philosophy
- * Computer software
- * Sociology
- * College statistics
- * High school calculus
- * Middle Eastern History
- * Anatomy and Physiology
- * English Literature
- * Can't think of one
- * Never thought I would dislike a class

Who are you?

Courses you were surprised to hate

- * Biology
- * Chemistry
- * Marketing
- * Political communication
- * Systematic theology
- * Watercolor painting
- * Philosophy
- * Ethics
- * Pediatric nursing
- * Theatre History
- * French
- * Never had one
- * Any class with an inconsiderate prof