Reacting to the Past Course outline and materials

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Recommended Citation
Huipe, Arturo, "Reacting to the Past Course outline and materials" (2020). Q2S Enhancing Pedagogy. 184.
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Foundation Seminar - NSCI 1100: Reacting to the past: Natural Sciences Perspectives

Arturo Huipe

COURSE DESCRIPTION
NSCI 1110. Reacting to the Past: Natural Sciences Perspectives.

Examination of a critical change in the natural sciences through the study of the context and impact of a specific idea, innovation or discovery. Using the Reacting to the Past approach, students play complex role-playing games informed by important historical sources (specific themes and topics may vary). Students will develop skills in information literacy, collaboration, speaking, and writing as they pursue the objectives of their assigned role by convincing classmates of their views. Following the game, debriefing will facilitate deeper understandings of the focus concepts and provide reflection about how learning occurred. These skills are critical for teaching and learning, and they provide a foundation for success in any field of study at the University and beyond. Satisfies GE category E.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

LO 1: Students will be able to challenge conventionally accepted ideas and assess their validity

LO 2: Students will learn to examine their learned learning skills and be able apply them to new scenarios and modify as necessary

LO 3: Students will be able to assess the value and validity of facts used to support arguments and draw conclusions

LO 4: Students will engage in reading academic journals such that they will be able to dissect and critique new experimental design and validity

PROJECT GOALS

First year seminars have proven to be a high impact practice that aids in retention and teaching students universal skills that they can apply to all facets of University life as well as becoming a lifelong learner. CSUSB will be requiring all incoming freshman to take one such course as per the General education program. This learning community was instrumental and an efficient means of keeping informed on current educational research. Furthermore, discussion of these practices with experienced facilitators has allowed us to optimize existing tested activities and methods for the classroom.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Discussion in this learning communities involved among other things Backwards Course design, discussion of learning outcomes and various forms of shaping learning activities and instruction to meet student learning outcome goals.

COURSE ACTIVITIES

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<td>1. RTTP Participation game</td>
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<td>1. Writing Assignments</td>
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<td>2. Quizzes</td>
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<td>3. Information Literacy Activity</td>
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<td>4. Metacognitive Writing Exercise</td>
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<td>5. Journaling</td>
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Reacting to the Past Role Sheet (From: Susan K. Henderson, David E. Henderson, Challenging the USDA Food Pyramid – 1991)

Faction 2 Role 3 – Associate Prof of Nutrition at Penn State University

You studied biology in college, but after graduation from California State Polytechnic, you moved to Maine where you worked in food technology. This led you to take a Masters in Nutrition there and finally to get a PhD in Nutrition from Cornell, one of the most respected departments in the country. You have just been promoted to Associate Professor at Penn State and have already build a solid reputation in the field.

Objectives
You will fully support the science of the Pyramid and want it to be approved. You also believe the USDA should continue to conduct nutritional research and provide nutritional education.

Responsibilities
You have been hired as a consultant to the USDA to help them make their case in these hearings. Your primary role is to support the technical accuracy of the recommendations in the Food Pyramid. Since you work for the USDA and receive most of your grant support from them, you also will make the case that they do a good job of providing nutritional advice.

Assignments
You will prepare your presentation to the Committee and submit it before the hearing begins. The form this takes will be defined by the instructor.

Relationships
You have a national reputation for excellence in the field of nutrition and have some reservations about the newly revised guidelines, nothing serious but you are resentful that you were NOT selected as a paid consultant by the USDA to work on the revision but instead were called in at the very last minute to lend your support. Some of your resentment may surface in the form of lukewarm endorsement and oblique criticism. However, you must be careful because if you are too critical, it may prevent your receiving future contracts from the USDA.

Note: The mandate of the Department has historically been to promote the consumption of food and the production of ever larger quantities of food to help end hunger, both here and abroad. The new pyramid is controversial in part because it is the first time that the USDA has ever suggested reducing consumption of any food. It also takes the USDA beyond its mandate to end hunger and into the area of promoting health through managed food intake.

To Learn More

Biography based on Cheryl Achterberg: You may use this name for your role name with the understanding that the objectives in your role may not be those of the actual person you are playing.


Surgeon Generals Reports are particularly important. They provide the scientific basis for your arguments.

Newspaper articles provides political background on the controversy.
