

For the effective design and implementation of strategies that foster learner 'connectedness' in a pre-service teacher education course.

Summary and context of contribution

The most formative moment in my early lecturing career was a failure. For a brief but powerful moment in Semester II, 2007, about 90 minutes into a philosophy of education lecture, I became acutely aware of the disconnection between theory and praxis in my lecturing. I felt like the teacher in Colin Thiele's (1950) poem, 'Bird in the Classroom'. The students drowsed and drowned in the Teacher's monotone - limp bodies loping in the wordy heat'.

Foundations of Education. For example, in Rogaine, students work in small groups to follow cryptic clues to navigate around parts of the university significant to their candidature (e.g. Library Curriculum Collection, Teaching Learning Centre, Computer Labs etc.). At each location, students are given a number of their textbook which is linked to a crossword containing subject-specific concepts. The rogaine creates community while connecting students to the physical space of the university and to learning supports. In other GBLs, student representatives compete in games including 'Quick Quiz', 'Pictionary', 'Celebrity Concept', 'Poetry Tennis' and 'Detective Dual' in order to reinforce course theory and concepts, and to reduce exam anxiety. Each game is linked to a multimedia PowerPoint presentation. At the end of each round, students select from an electronic board of 'famous faces' – a 'Who's Who' of theorists and celebrities. Each celebrity or theorist is linked to a short, amusing or inspiring video clip relevant to the subject content. As a 'pedagogy for connectedness' I have used GBLs successfully to reduce exam anxiety, foster learning communities, and inspire students to link subject content to a 'bigger picture' beyond the lecture theatre and textbook. Student feedback in unsolicited emails after GBLs illustrates the positive effects that pedagogies of connectedness have, even in larger subject cohorts:

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