#72: *The Teaching & Learning Communique*

1 message

College-level Make and Take: Student Ownership of Collective Work

A desired objective for college professors is for their students' work to be meaningful and applicable to their lives. Unfortunately, that isn't always the case. Learned information seemingly evaporates at the end of semesters as students shift their focus to vacation, travel, and other endeavours. So how can the learning in classes be more accessible and meaningful? Let the students make it and take it home.

The practice of "Make and Take" has primarily been used in elementary schools where students engage in hands-on craft products such as holiday ornaments, milk carton bird feeders, and decorative pencil holders. At the college level, Make and Take projects are designed to engage students in a deeper level of learning beyond the classroom; specifically, for students to collaborate, create, and take home a product.

Guiding principles

1. *The project must have relevance to class*. Some class group activities are organized as icebreakers, bonding activities, or impromptu discussions. Your project can contain any of these elements, but the main focus of the work should be authentic and involve a core component of your class.
2. *The project should be a shared experience with contributions by all*. It is essential to have the whole class engaged in the project. The instructor should also be on board with contributions, direction, and encouragement.
3. *The project should be usable beyond the tenure of the class*. The design of the project should be something that incorporates class knowledge that is useful and accessible outside of class.

Types of Make and Take projects with examples

Individual to collective

In this model, each student contributes an equal part of the assignment, which is compiled and distributed to the class. This allows students to share something special and enlighten their classmates with their contributions.

Example: As part of an *Issues and Influences in Education* class, students are directed to prepare an annotated bibliography of their educational and cultural influences represented by research, literature, film, and other media. Each student is asked to contribute an assigned number of professional influences.

The Takeaway: The *Our Influences Archive* is written by students, and compiled and organized by the instructor. The benefits of this project include students' ability to work independently, share work they consider influential, and in the end, possess a document that could inspire curiosity.

Group to collective

In this model, students participate in groups in order to organize and solve a problem. Each group has its own responsibility, or a piece of the puzzle to contribute to the larger project.

Example: In a *Utilization of Multimedia* class, after researching multimedia resources, groups are instructed to create a manual reviewing electronic media platforms and programs. Responsibilities include cover & page design, introduction, collection editor, table of contents, and finishing editor. Each group works on their responsibility and coordinates with the next group.

The Takeaway: The *Multimedia Manual* is a comprehensive handbook of various multimedia programs. The benefits of this project include an increased awareness of available media programs in a document that can be shared with teachers, parents, and administrators.

Collective to collective

This model involves more than one class, ideally in different disciplines. Instructors collaborate to design a common investigation that requires contributions from each discipline. Results from student work in each class are combined to create a new collective learning that students can use outside the classroom.

Example: Community college faculty collaborate on a project to assess the physical fitness aptitude of the campus during a normal day of classes. Students in an engineering class measure the distances between campus buildings and the heights of the campus hills. Students in a health class measure the walking distances and calories burned between the buildings, while students in an algebra class work on developing an algebraic matrix formula to tabulate measurements for distances and calories burned during a given school day.

The Takeaway: The *Campus Fitness Info-pack,* a set of guidelines and formulas designed to calculate distances walked and calories burned on campus. Ideally, the *Info-pack* can also be applied to other venues from the local park to the supermarket.