

# Teaching Tips

A Forum for discussion and tips for advancing teaching and learning at Mona

Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, The UWI Mona



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## Special points of interest:

- The *Teaching Tips* Newsletter is a publication of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) at the UWI, Mona.
- The newsletter is published three times during each semester and once during the summer. It provides tips for improving teaching and learning in higher education and is available online (<http://myspot.mona.uwi.edu/cetl>) as well as in the office of the CETL.
- If you need additional teaching tips on specific classroom practices, please contact us.

Welcome to the  
New Academic Year



The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) welcomes all new and returning faculty and staff to the new semester and new academic year. We wish for you all a very happy and fulfilling semester and year.

## The relationships students develop with their with peers

A third major relationship in higher education is amongst students themselves. Students are friends with, and learn with fellow students. It is well known from constructivism that learning is a deeply social activity. In ideal learning groups, students support each other in the quest to learn. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) found that peer relations are an important aspect of students' college experience. Interactions with peers mediate a number of key educational outcomes including changes in values and attitudes. The way students relate to their peers is also important for the emotional relationships that inform cooperative and collaborative learning (Johnson et al., 2014).

University teachers can support the development of peer relationship through the work we set them to do together and how we help them to understand and value communities.

Here are some questions for you, the university teacher?

- 1) What approaches have I taken to help to develop positive peer relationships amongst my students?
- 2) How do I create classroom communities that enable and empower students to learn?
- 3) What communication strategies are employed to underscore my interest in community as I interface with my students?
- 4) How do I design assignments with the objective of community building?
- 5) What activities do I do with my students or recommend to them to build community in the class or assigned learning groups?

## Emotions and Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

### PART TWO

In the last edition of *Teaching Tips* (summer edition, June 2022) we focused on the emotions in teaching and learning in higher education. We continue this discussion as we recognise that Quinlan (2015) offers a framework for our reflection on pedagogical practices that are mindful of the emotions. At first, she calls attention to the relational nature of education and then she highlights four key relationships:

- 1) Relationship with teaching and the subject
- 2) Relationship with students,
- 3) Relationships with peers,
- 4) Relationship with self.

These four key relationships are important in using the emotions in teaching and learning in higher education. Consequently, you are invited to think about these relationships and determine for yourself how they might be used to impact/improve your teaching. In the summer edition (June 2022) we called attention to the first and second concerns/relationships. This month we call attention to the third and fourth concerns:

## The relationship with the self

A fourth relationship to consider is that with the self. College and university students confront new ideas and ways of thinking as they interact with people from other backgrounds and/or study unfamiliar ideas. Students engage the relationship with themselves as they develop new identities during their college and university days. Research indicates that as students develop in college and university they grapple with issues of identity and intimacy (Erikson, 1959) and shift from relying on others to self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2009). Students change in college. Even though mature students are at a different developmental stage, they too change. They are still in a transitional period and in many instances existing views are challenged and identities are re-constructed. Critical thinking calls on students to question received wisdom, including value positions taught by their families or practised in their various communities. In this regard, students are called on to deconstruct old meanings and ways of making meaning and reconstruct meanings (Parks 2000). These developmental changes undoubtedly involve strong emotions. When students experience changes in, for instance, their faith, their sense of purpose and even self, they experience multiple powerful emotions before embracing a new sense of commitment and incorporating new values into ones life. University teachers must be mindful of these realities.

### Questions for you, the university teacher?

- 1) How do I create opportunities for students to test their own limits and go beyond habitual experiences?
- 2) What kind of extra classroom activities have I used to push students to see the world from other vantage points?
- 3) How do I schedule reflective activities (invite reflection on how students feels in their bodies and hearts) and personal perspectives on the material in my teaching?
- 4) What pedagogical approaches do I use to create an environment of trust and critical dialogue amongst all members of the class/learning community?

- 5) How do I treat with the real questions (ones we don't already know the answers to) about big ideas, key thinkers or educational experiences and listen openly to the responses of my students?

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