



Northeastern

Foundation Year: Reflections on Shifting
Practices and Re-energized Teaching with
Diverse students

Foundation Year

- First-year, one-year program in CPS
- All students from Boston (mostly students of color, wide range of ethnicities)
- Many are low-income and first-generation
- Attended a variety of secondary schools, and many students struggled academically

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Four Categories:

- Preconceptions
- Realization
- Shifted Practices
- Re-energized Teaching

Preconceptions:

- Work would focus almost exclusively on getting students to improve their writing skills

Realization:

- Our hardest working students are the most successful. Motivation = success
- Not only teach writing, but also ways of thinking and behaving that lead to college success = educational psychology

Shifted Practices:

- Away from composition theory, and toward literature that focuses on educational psychology issues
- Ask students to read and write about literature that focuses on educational psychology (e.g., grit and perseverance, the impact of stress on learning, planning for and avoiding distractions, growth mindset, etc.)

Re-energized Teaching:

- Learning about a new discipline: educational psychology
- Eager to share with my students what I learn about educational psychology
- Curious to know: what do students think of these concepts, and will they help them succeed?

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Preconceptions:



Realization:

Socratic Seminars - Ground Rules

- 1. Speak so that all can hear you.**
- 2. Listen closely.**
- 3. Speak without raising hands.**
- 4. Refer to the text.**
- 5. Talk to each other, not just to the leader.**
- 6. Ask for clarification. Don't stay confused.**
- 7. Invite and allow others to speak.**
- 8. Consider all viewpoints and ideas.**
- 9. Know that you are responsible for the quality of the seminar.**

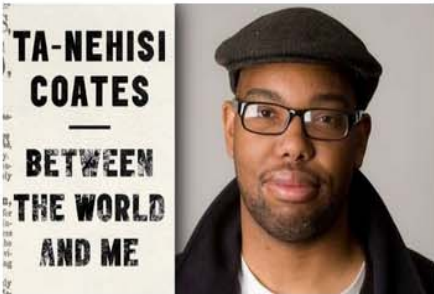

Shifted Practices:

The screenshot shows a Blackboard Wiki page titled "Between the World and Me". The page is designed to help students "interrogate" and respond to Ta-Nehisi Coates' book. The main content area includes an "Introduction" section with the following text:

This Wiki is designed to help you "interrogate" and respond to Ta-Nehisi's book. You will be adding to the Wiki every two weeks and your contributions will, along with the bi-weekly Discussion Board posts about Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow count for 25% of your final grade.

Introduction Edit Wiki Content

Created By John Wolfe on Thursday, September 10, 2015 12:06:29 PM EDT
last modified by John Wolfe on Thursday, September 10, 2015 7:12:41 PM EDT

We will be using this Wiki to annotate Ta-Nehisi Coates's Between the World and Me.

What will you be posting? You can choose from the following options:

1) Explanatory information. The book's epigraph is excerpted from a poem by Richard Wright. Do you know who he is? You might choose to post a brief explanation along with a relevant link.

The page also features a sidebar with navigation links for the course, including Home Page, Announcements, Syllabus, Faculty Profile, Course Material, Discussions, Web Sites, Tools, My Grades, and Wiki. The bottom of the screenshot shows a Windows taskbar with various application icons and a system tray displaying the time as 8:12 PM on 9/30/2015.

Re-energized Teaching:



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Preconceptions:

- Grouping of students by math placement test results would result in course sections with students of relatively homogenous ability levels, prior math experiences, and at least moderate interests or aspirations

Realization:

- Students' ability levels, previous math experiences, and interests are immensely heterogeneous when placed into courses by similar placement test results
- Finding common ground, which helps to eliminate math-phobia, while also creating a climate conducive for both weaker and stronger students to ask questions is key

Shifted Practices:

- Conceptual tie-ins have not been rooted in “traditional” math topics due to varying ability and student interests
- The commonality of Hip Hop culture, along with themes of social justice and civic engagement, has been implemented to spark productive dialogue around the importance of math and statistical literacy

Re-energized Teaching:

- Introduced weekly written homework summaries to gauge interest in class topics which has provided more immediate feedback than waiting for course surveys
- Have more recently let students self-select groups they sit in by understanding level per topic (A,B,C or below), results in movement, better dialogue, and student-centered learning/teaching to occur

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Preconceptions:

- Students would be motivated if they knew they had the opportunity to fulfill all or most of their college math requirements in Foundation Year.

Realization:

- Many students are motivated, but lack confidence.
- Students need help in developing academic and social skills.

Shifted Practices:

- Switched classroom instruction to a Flipped Classroom.
- Moved away from worksheets and students are now required to do more collaborative work inside and outside of the classroom.
- Students are asked to write reflections on specific topics: identify their strengths and things they still need to work on to achieve mastery.

Re-energized Teaching:

- Flipped Classroom Research using Principles of Teaching and Learning:
 - Students' Perceptions of Flipped Classrooms
 - Learning Outcomes in a Flipped Classroom

Questions?

Thoughts?