

Memo #2: Collaborative Experiences in Class Content

Familiarity, Shared Goals, and Aftermath for Teamwork on Educational Disciplinary Studies

EDUC 723 Multicultural Issues in Education, Fall 2021
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December 7, 2021 | Dachao Sun (snd@upenn.edu)

To do a team project that involves discussion, analyses, inquiries, learning, and report writing had been a regular practice of mine since my time in early collegiate level studies. It came to this fall semester with a fresh start and a squad of new classmates and peers, collaboration and discourse had truly, technically, and emotionally, enhanced my learning effectiveness in the current course we have on multicultural issues in education. As we approached the grand finale for refinement and presentation of book group studies today, I hereby make a reflective summary regarding both small group and book group collaborations thus far in this semester.

Familiarity: How I Describe the Experience

One of the very first steps in collaborative teamwork is to get to know each other. We have multiple attributes, to consider a group of size three to five for instance, and these different members approach, perceive, and contribute to the theme of project differently. As at least to a certain degree learning is a situated, social activity and process which is constructed through the development of interaction (Nieto, S., 1999, ch.1). I had developed such “familiarity” with two groups of teammates each in a unique, memorable way.

For the small group, we started by conversations. it was a great time spending together reading the two required textbooks in the first month of class -- the four of us had a varying set of life experiences and personal interests, while I was mostly amazed by the flexibility, breadth and depth of knowledge, and the capability to capture a network of relations in both common sense and academic perspectives from the teammates I had. Gradually, I also got the opportunity to share my previous education experience in other geographic locations in the United States and attempted to bring sensible personal examples to enhance the understanding of required readings.

My other book group, in a slightly different manner, began to know each other with a certain prior knowledge based on what we observed all classmates by that point in the semester; we did not have the chance to chat much

school-life experiences around the course content though, while we knew each other from what other courses we take and part-time, volunteering engagements we have had related to teaching and curriculum designs—which all added to the pillars of our relationships by a good amount.

Shared Goals: Comfort, Discomfort, and Learning Outcomes

Overseeing the completion of reading the same book, it was with a clear content in mind when we started writing notes about the book (*Intersectionality* by Collins and Bilge from 2016) as a book group together, at different times. The good side was that instructions and distributions of workload were relatively clear. However, there remained also **latency in response time** which, especially from my perspective, was a source of anxiety and **even a little fear of mutual trust upon our collaboration**. Fortunately, thanks to the kindness, maturity, and professionalism of my teammates, our group finally got the stage with multiple (four total) in-person plus virtual discussions to **converge at a hopefully cohesive presentation** for what we learned in reading the book.

Aftermath Analysis: Memorable Moments and Future Works

Students learn best when they engaged in proactive collaboration with others (Nieto, S., 1999, ch.3). I think at least to me this holds true in the sense that I could critically listen and respond (and occasionally brainstorm) to teammates' suggestions and arguments, henceforth progressively building our shared understanding.

The “aftermath” type of reflection and analysis is a popular practice across corporate settings, for big companies for instance, while in the scope of small group academic learning engagements it shall also be valued, because through analyses in retrospect we would be able to spot unsolved issues and improve individually as well as being a team.

In the future, I primarily need to focus on planning, learning more on the content and situated disciplinary context before joining a discussion, and being a better listener. These were to some degree partially missing in my communication with my book group this time, which had actually caused some confusion on my side. I also want to thank my instructor and our teaching team for always providing us mental supports. I look forward to becoming a better team player in future endeavors of educational studies.

References

Nieto, S. (1999). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities*. NY: Teachers College Press: *Multicultural Education Series*.