

“No Words”: A Non-Narrative Approach to Education

Submitted to:
American Association of Agricultural Educators
Southern Region 2020 Conference
Louisville, KY

Innovative Idea Poster

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Introduction

According to Gardner, there are nine multiple intelligences (MI) learners can possess (Gardner, 1997). The theory of MI consists of many divisions of individual intelligence depending on a student's learning mode (McFarlane, 2011). It is known students learn in different ways. Students possess multiple learning styles, but often have preferences to how they learn best. The learning styles based upon the nine MI are bodily kinesthetic, existential, interpersonal, intrapersonal, logical-mathematical, musical, naturalistic, verbal/linguistic, and visual/spatial. Awareness of the MI is important to an educator. Educators should utilize the MI to design lessons appealing to numerous MI. A 2006 survey of high school students indicated 50% of students are bored each day they go to school (Mintz, 2006). Additionally, 75% of the students indicate the reason for being bored is because the material is not interesting (Mintz, 2006). Typical reading and writing instruction only apply to certain MI. It is vital pre-service teachers learn methods of utilizing MI within their classrooms to delivery interesting content.

Pre-service agricultural education teachers in a southeastern institution are tasked with explaining their teaching philosophy through the creation of an item, painting, song, video, or skit. The purpose of the assignment is to put pre-service agricultural education teachers in a mindset of creativity. The highest level of Bloom's taxonomy of learning is "create" explaining learners best retain information when they create something (Shabatura, 2018). As they explain their teaching philosophy through the creation of an item, their product will reflect their MI. The combination of their creation and their peers shows numerous accounts of MI to be reflected in future teachings. By exposing pre-service agricultural educators to MI and developing their teaching philosophy they are expected to create engaging content combating disinterest in the high school classroom. This research aligns with the National Research Agenda (Roberts, Harder, & Brashears, 2016), "Priority 5: Efficient and Effective Agricultural Education Programs" (p.43).

How it Works

Since its inception, a professor within the Agricultural Education program has included an assignment within the sophomore-level Early Field Experience of Teaching Career and Technical Education course that requires pre-service teachers to: create an item, painting, song, video or skit representing their educational philosophy. The purpose of an educational philosophy is to establish a core platform for educational beliefs and practices. However, the uniqueness of a non-narrative educational philosophy allows the pre-service teachers the opportunity to incorporate their MI into their presentations. Students are given the assignment on the first day of the course and are urged to write and reflect on their personal educational philosophy and narratives throughout the semester. Rising to the challenge, the pre-service teachers prepare and for unknown audiences; utilize creativity to showcase their philosophy; and incorporate the characteristics of an effective teacher from their observations and previous courses.

As students create and prepare for their non-narrative presentations, they are urged to consider their personal beliefs to the following statements: the purpose of agriculture; the purpose of education; educators can best help others learn by; my strength as an agricultural educator is; and as an agricultural educator, I can... On the final day of the course, students come to class prepared to present their non-narratives to a range of audiences. Faculty and staff within University of [state] Agricultural Education department are invited to attend the non-narrative presentations. After the lesson, participants and educators are able to discuss, ask questions, and converse about the non-narrative.

Results to Date

The non-narrative presentations have just finished a fourth year of success this fall. The use of the pre-service agricultural teachers' MI has led to a variety of instructional methods within agricultural education. Chase wrote and read a poem, titled "Welcome to Mr. C's Room." The ideology of the poem was the four walls surrounding them did not define them; however, they defined the four walls and what would be taught within them. Joseph engraved a hammer with the four words integrity, respect, honesty, and ethic. These four words represented the core of his teaching philosophy. The ideology behind the engraved hammer is the four words were not permanent. They could be erased and amended over time. Using CD album covers to showcase eight phrases within Tanners' educational philosophy. Furthermore, the open assignment allowed the artistic students, like Josiah to draw a picture, create a puzzle, and showcase calligraphy skills as their educational philosophy. The agricultural education program has observed a wide variety of creative non-narrative educational philosophies and believes this experience provides a beneficial view on their upcoming roles as an agricultural educator.

Future Plans

Seeing the non-narrative assignment has thus far been a success, the teacher preparation program plans to continue to utilize this assignment within the sophomore-level Early Field Experience of Teaching Career and Technical Education course. The teacher preparation program plans to utilize professional networking and word of mouth to increase the participation of the non-narrative presentations, rather than just inviting the programs faculty and staff. This will allow the pre-service educators time to network, build social capital, and gain insight into the industry and community. Additionally, the agricultural education program would like to promote creativity and MI in additional preparation courses. This will allow the pre-service students the opportunity to promote creativity learning opportunities within the profession to aid in other teacher trainings. This particular assignment focused specifically on non-narrative educational philosophies; therefore, it is advised that the program collaborates to offer opportunities for a more versatile experience.

Costs/Resources Needed

The cost of this project is within the travel to the schools to conduct observations. Additionally, costs of materials to teach the lesson to their peers is present. Resources needed to carry out this assignment are classroom space, detailed observations of classroom, and necessary materials to give the presentations.

References

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