

Teaching Reflections Winter 2013

During the term I was teaching Intro and Mass Communications.

1101-001

This class was a lot of fun and was always a pleasure to teach. As part of the course I offered to give them 5% towards their grade if they completed Pearson's "Learning for Change" online exercise dedicated to donating textbooks to students in developing countries. I am proud to say that virtually everyone in the class did the online exercises which resulted in the class donating 460 books to students in developing countries. Good work everyone!

3345-01

This was a really tough class to get a handle on. Attendance was very good for all classes but there were only a few that would actually speak up during discussions. I think I should have tried harder to entice people to talk earlier in the course because as the term went on there appeared to be two solitudes, those that spoke and those that did not. There was little I could do without calling on individual students to comment, and I have always been resistant to putting students on the spot like that.

I was also frustrated by students who complained that my grading was too hard. For this course I had 2 writing assignments, broken down to 10% on the first and then 30% on the second so that they could learn from my comments on #1 and then be more likely to "nail" the second, more valuable assignment. In the 6 weeks between assignment 1 being returned and assignment 2 being due, and after multiple offers to look at their work before the submitted, providing copies of excellent assignments (and my grading) on the course web-site, tons of office hours, I only had 2 students show me their work before they submitted it. The result, for some reason, students did not believe I would mark the second assignments to the same standard as the first. Some students were definitely upset and believed they deserved higher scores – obviously I disagreed.

However, there were also a few "bright lights" in that class that I believe are going to become excellent sociologists some day.

As my last semester at MRU for at least a few years, I am really thankful for the chance to work so closely with students in such small classes.

Has been a pleasure and an honor.