Pamela Snyder-Gallagher

                            PATHWAYS TO GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

                                           REFLECTIVE PORTFOLIO TEMPLATE

Part 1

Reflecting on Theory, Practice, and Communication

(To be written after workshops 1 and 2)

* **What is your teaching philosophy?**
  + My teaching philosophy is to instruct students in such a way as to truly reach them and make them feel a part of the lesson plan. I say this so as to have them feel a certain type of “ownership” of the material. This is hard sometimes since when I teach fashion history a lot of the book information is coming from a very Western-viewpoint. I try and relay any and all information as having it’s roots all over the world and in many different cultures, not just the one that I grew up in and is most familiar to me and possibly them, too.
* **What do you see as the benefits and/or challenges to having culturally and linguistically diverse students in your class?**

* + The challenges are easy to state since misinterpretations of work or misunderstandings may occur. On the other hand, I also believe that if there are misinterpretations, students also have their own intuition to go by and realize that I really want them to succeed and enjoy knowing that they have gotten something out of my “lecturing” to them. I think that they know that I enjoy seeing the world through differing views, which is why I call on them all of the time to hear their input. I enjoy forcing myself to think outside the given parameters, and by doing so, am hopefully setting an example for them to do so, too.
* **How might the ideas about language, diversity, and cross-cultural communication discussed during the NEA workshops thus far contribute to your classroom practice?**
  + I definitely feel more comfortable having the students contribute to what may be seen as a lecture-only class. By doing this they know that I appreciate their viewpoints all equally. The NEA workshop basically empowered me to further incite student feedback, even using students as teachers to one another, which was not the way that I was taught, but is empowering to them.

Part 2

Moving Theory into Practice: Diversity as Resource

(To be written after workshops 3 and 4)

* **How might you change an existing lesson/assignment as a result of participating in the NEA project?**
  + Concerning written assignments, I am more open to the idea of accepting “Present Day English” and am more relaxed about accepting work whose written message is clear, even if punctuation and grammar are lacking.
* **What new assignment might you develop that would incorporate lessons learned as a result of the Pathways to Globalization workshops?**
  + Concerning the fashion history classes, I am open when assigning research from a certain era, to it being of a non-western nature. For example, when assigning a design project based on inspiration coming from the Middle Ages, even though in class we mostly look at Western European clothing, I let them know that they can choose as inspiration any culture from all over the world, as long as the research is primary and it falls within the same time frame. I encourage students when using history as a basis for design, to be culturally literate not only when it comes to The West, but respect their desires to go maybe to other lands other than those directly studied. I feel like it allows the rest of the class to see the “entire world” of an era, not just the prescribed Western one that is covered in the cirriculum.
* When responding to and evaluating student writing and/or presentations, which assessment practices will best inform students’ understanding of communicating across cultures?
  + This goes along with what was answered in the first part of this section and the “present day English” idea. I think that it is good to correct punctuation and to inform the student of what is correct “American English”, but will no longer be marking them down as much as I used to, point for point, on grammatical errors. Meaning, I may give an overall comment that communication through grammar usage was not as effective as it could have been, and grade them down a half-letter grade, rather than counting up all errors and deducting a point value from each “incorrect” grammar flaw. This way the student doesn’t feel “penalized” for being ESL, for example, while also stressing the appreciation/sentiment of their ideas over the semantics of their grammar usage.

Part 3

Teaching Goals Statement

(To be written upon completion of the program)

* **Given the topics discussed in the NEA workshops and your own experiences teaching, please prepare a personal statement describing your teaching goals for the next few years**

My goals in the classroom are to empower students so that they want to learn more. I want them to feel a part of the information being given, as opposed to it being imposed upon them from above. This can be accomplished through frequent interaction with the students concerning the material, with differing viewpoints being heard, discussed and valued all the same. Hopefully this will also enable them to want to empower others to do the same, which in turn will foster a healthy, happy learning environment where concepts “sink in” better with a deeper, more active understanding.