

Author conversations

On getting the most out of classroom time

Niva Tro

I want my students at the end of the day to be competent and passionate.

So I want them not just to understand the “what,” but the “why.” And when they can get there, then you can have the kind of transformation that we’re talking about here.

At the end of the day, I feel responsible for their learning. And that someday they will have to take an exam, or an entrance exam for a university or for a graduate program, and if I don’t do my job, they’re not going to do well. So I tell them to trust me for a little bit. Just trust me and try this.

And, like I said, I’m holding them accountable before class, during class, and after class with a series of assignments. None of them super long. But enough to get them engaged in the material, and interacting with the material, and getting them to think about it. And that, also, by being able to assign things out of class, it lowers the cognitive load for them in class. And in class, they can focus on applying what we’re learning, and making really sure they can understand it — do the problems. And that also allows me to have them collaborate with each other in class. And usually by the first few weeks, the students realize that this is a good way to learn.

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