

## Seminar Summary, 11/5/13

Today's topic: pot pourri

- Today, we cleaned up a few things that we hadn't done yet, continued/finished our group work discussion, introduced active learning, and discussed a little bit more of "how to be a graduate student," which seems to be the most important piece for the students at this point.
- We started by having them discuss in groups, as always. We had them talk about whether they've changed the way they conduct group work, if they have tried anything new and successful (or unsuccessful), etc.
- We discussed the handout we passed out last time as a group (see reflections). We wanted to know if they found it helpful; results were mixed. There is a good chance not many of them did much with it, but it was for their own benefit, so that is all right.
- We continued talking about group work. Some students shared strategies, which we discussed as a whole. We also spent a little more time discussing how to effectively grade students in groups (group grade vs. individual grade or grades, etc).
- Tim passed out a handout on the seminar he attended regarding, ironically, group work in an active learning setting. The handout was primarily about Bloom's taxonomy. See reflections for a deeper look at this...
- Tim spoke to the students for about ten minutes regarding active learning, especially from the context of this taxonomy. This was presented as something for students to consider, and try to extract something that they could use for their own students in their own classrooms.
- There was a short discussion about the taxonomy and about active learning (especially how learning could be active without the group setting).
- The next portion was a discussion about simply being a graduate student. Elliot and I have been hearing from several of the students about how stressed they are, how confused they are, etc. We reminded them that there are many resources that they can use, and plenty of help that they can seek out. Tim reminded them that the first year is brutal from a class standpoint (i.e. lots of homework and exams) but that it assuredly gets better. Elliot discussed on-campus services that can help them navigate the storm that is the first year of graduate school.
- We discussed, as requested, their responsibilities for final exam time. Specifically, we told them where they were expected to be and when, grading responsibilities, volunteer opportunities, etc.
- We briefly wrapped up group work, discussing the level of tasks, the social skills necessary for group work, motivation, finishing and assessing an assignment, and formal assessment tactics such as having everyone in the group write up a solution/paper and picking one randomly to grade, as opposed to having the group turn only one in.