

Online Instructional Approaches Towards Strength-based Instruction

Learning Objectives (75)

A strengths-based perspective in instruction includes viewing learners' assets, inclusive of knowledge, culture, and experiences, as a benefit and resource which can contribute to community belonging. From elementary through higher education, leveraging learners' assets has been found to support academic identity, self-efficacy, and social belonging, all contributing to achievement. In the proposed session, we will discuss how a strengths-based approach can be incorporated into online teaching and learning to support community belonging.

Instructor Language

Beyond getting to know learners and their backgrounds, instructors can employ slight changes. Reconceptualizing teaching requires subtle and nuanced shifts in language. Demonstrating care and support for learners and their contributions can be as simple as stating, "I am glad we get to work together this semester." or "We are partners in learning more about [insert content being explored]." When teaching online, instructors could include authentic statements acknowledging belief in learners' capabilities and strengths. Providing feedback on completed assignments and recognizing learners' strengths is another means to support learners' assets. When words convey strengths and affirm capabilities, (Superfine, 2021, p.331) refers to this type of language as "strength-based language."

Further, the language utilized by instructors should be framed as a people-first or person-first language (Dunn & Andrews, 2015). The person, not the condition or circumstance, leads any discussion or writing. Likewise, instructors' language should not differ in how they speak to learners. The lens through which an instructor views learners is foundational to learner success. Having high expectations for all learners can support learners' beliefs and self-efficacy related to their academic capabilities. Instructors' language is an instructional approach to communicating care and positivity.

Conclusion

The importance of this presentation is to provide instructors with research-based ideas related to strengths-based instruction. The proposed online session will guide higher education faculty who aim to integrate an asset-based approach into their teaching and learning to build community in online learning. Further, the information shared in this

session will aid instructors in adopting inclusive online instructional practices. Assignments that demonstrate an asset-based approach will be shared.

References

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