



# Getting F.R.E.E. While Helping Students Learn

Precious Hall, Ph.D. and Cathy Brewster, M.A.  
Truckee Meadows Community College  
Reno, Nevada

# What is F.R.E.E.?

- Faculty for Radical Education and Enlightenment
  - Began at TMCC in 2003
- Inspired by Giroux's *Public Spaces, Private Lives* (2001)
  - Hope and action in democratic participation through public education
- Flash Mob Model
  - Low-cost experiential learning



# 3 Evolving Principles of F.R.E.E.

- 1. Revolution from Within
  - Interdisciplinary “big idea” theme within the existing class schedule
    - Use the existing structure to motivate change and learning
    - On-campus experiential learning : Social drama between faculty and students
  - Community College Instructors as intellectuals
    - An alternative to bureaucratic and committee workload
- 2. Student Participation (75-200)
  - Cross disciplinary
  - Active learning and student presentations
  - Student Movement and Creativity
- 3. Interdisciplinary Assessment Display
  - Student Synthesis

# Past F.R.E.E. Topics

- Evolution vs. Creation
- Vision
- Censorship
- Paradigm Shifts
- Ways of Knowing
- Organic
- Binary Opposition
- Nature vs. Nurture
- Diversity
- What is Fear?
- Mythology
- Freedom of Expression
- Colour Blinders
- Water
- Hum(Animals)



# F.R.E.E. Subject Participants

- Psychology
- Sociology
- Anthropology
- Education
- English
- Mathematics
- Engineering
- Physics
- Biology
- History
- Visual Arts
- Political Science
- Business
- Statistics
- Religious Studies
- Core Humanities

# Past F.R.E.E. Activities

- Parachute censored book
- Eyeball dissection
- Ballroom Dancing – Vision
- Performance Art – Vision (Spirals)
- Student Art
- Hornbook Battledore
- Live Music
- Poetry Reading/SLAM
- Games – Biodiversity
- Corners
- The Exquisite Corpse
- Sandbox



# F.R.E.E. 2016: Colour "Blinders"





# F.R.E.E. 2017 - Water





# F.R.E.E. 2017: Water





# Hornbook Battledore - F.R.E.E. 2017 Activity





# How to Get Started with F.R.E.E. - Fall Semester (Planning)

- Have initial “kick-off” meeting
  - Announce the meeting and topic: Open to the entire faculty community
- Plan on monthly meetings
  - Share readings and ideas within your discipline/classes you will teach in the Spring
  - Discuss how you can have cross class collaboration and interdisciplinary activities for Spring
  - Be open to a diversity of opinions
- Organizational Necessities
  - Secure location
    - Big enough to accommodate students and movement within the space - preferably an open/public space
  - Estimate student participation and attendance
  - Snacks!!!
  - Meetings should not last longer than one hour

# How to Get Started with F.R.E.E. - Spring Semester (Implementation)

- Resume monthly meetings
  - Create an agenda
  - Designate a coordinator (logistics)
- Have F.R.E.E. Event
- Have a debrief meeting after the event
  - Choose a person and or book who will use the summer to consider the topic to be announced in Fall Semester
    - Organic
      - What's happening in the world around you?
      - What theme(s) are present in your selected reading(s)?



# The Good Stuff

## Faculty

- Treats faculty as intellectuals
- Culturally creative rather than bureaucratic
- Satisfaction from within the campus community
- Not a major time commitment
- Taking a risk with support

## Students

- Get to make thematic connections
- Observe collegial interaction
- Students see themselves as part of the larger campus community
- Exposes students to other faculty in different disciplines.

# Points to Remember

- F.R.E.E. is...
  - Collaborative
    - Faculty ensure student participation
  - Energetic
  - Free
    - No extra money or resources should be necessary
  - Not an additional burden to faculty workload
  - Intellectual
    - Inspired by outside readings done by instructors/professors
  - Unrehearsed
    - Organic/Evolving



# F.R.E.E. Starts with You!

- It only takes one person