



# Boosting Undergraduate Students' Engagement in Political Learning

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# Disclosures

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## **Learning Objectives:**

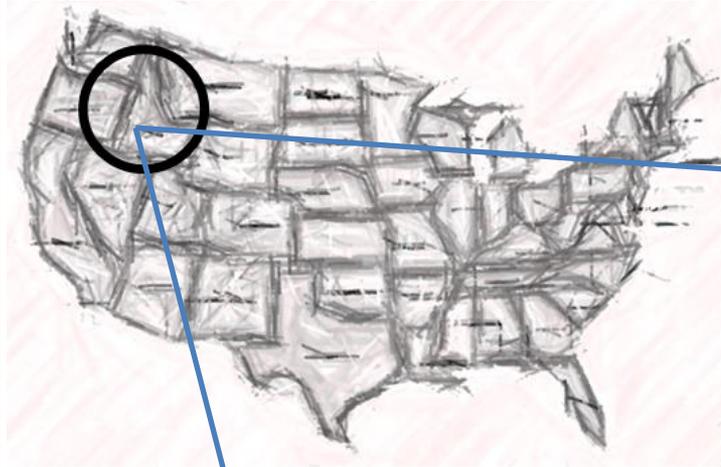
**Identify the learning processes & components of the described learning theory.**

**Identify teaching learning practices influencing students' engagement in one undergraduate policy course.**

**I have no conflicts of interest.**

**No sponsorship or commercial support was given to the author.**

# Our University School of Nursing



**Boise, Idaho, USA**  
**Idaho State Capitol**



**How can undergraduate nursing students learn processes of policy making and politics in order to influence healthy lives for all?**



# **NURS 420 Policy, Power, & Voice**

**2011, Constructivist Grounded Theory Study (Charmaz, 2006)**

**Research Questions:**

- **How did students learn political ideas?**
- **What was their learning process like?**



## **Context: NURS 420 *Policy, Power & Voice***

### **Blended/Hybrid Online Class**

**5 live classes, 10 weeks online**

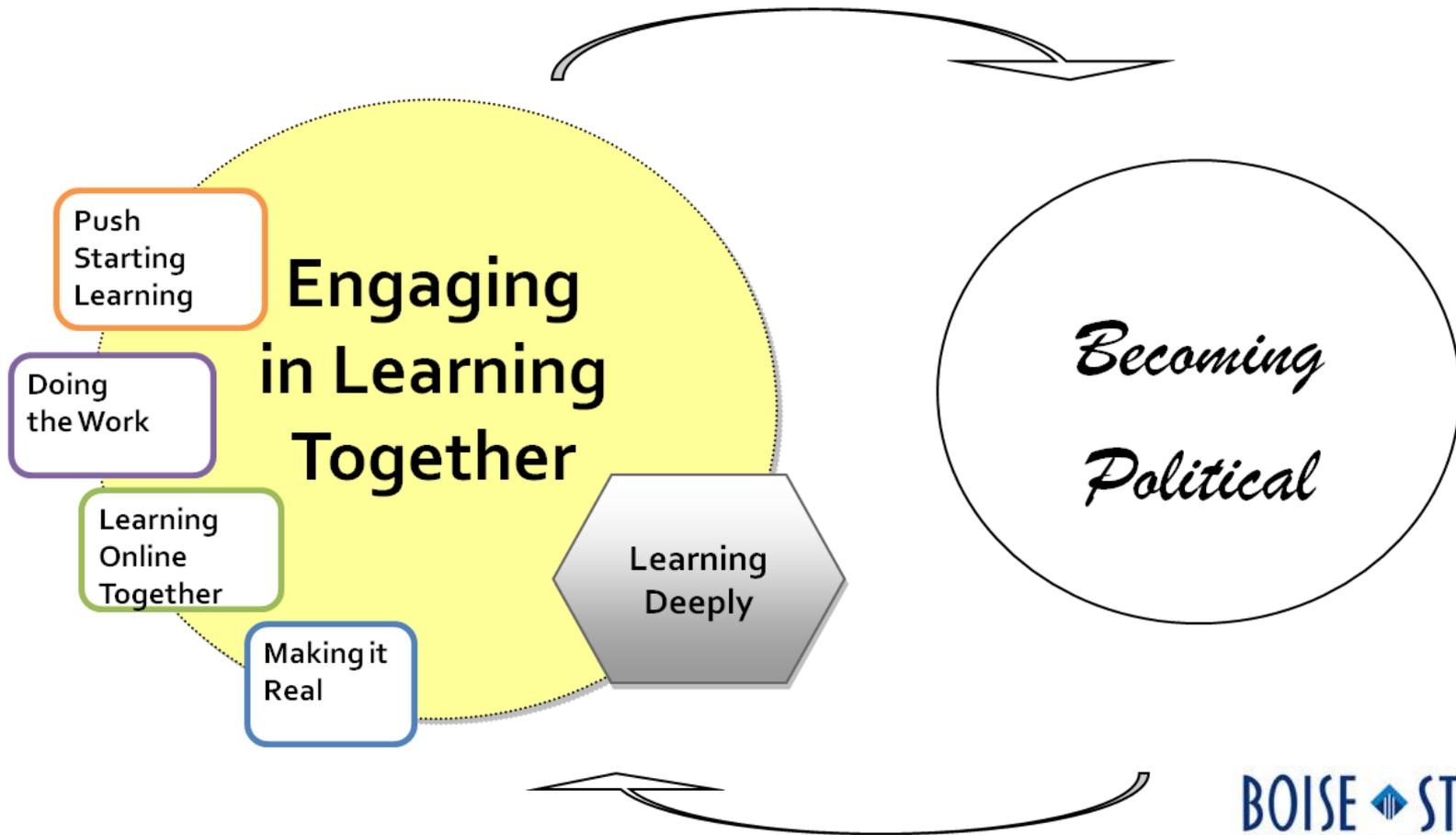
**6-7 students/Discussion Board groups**

**Instructor participation in discussions**

**Experiential learning activities**

**Writing intensive**

# Results: A Theory of Undergraduate Nursing Students' Political Learning



# Push Starting Learning



**Course structure, processes, & expectations that:**

- **Helped students take responsibility**
- **Accelerated immersion in course ideas**
- **Fostered active involvement in learning**

# Push Starting Learning



## Satisfying structure & design:

- “bite-sized” topics, fewer lectures,
- knew expectations, clear directions & rubrics

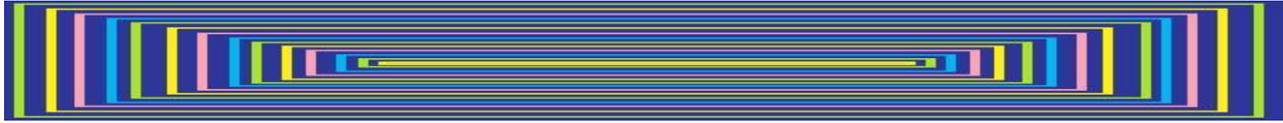
## Taking charge:

- More choice over when, where, & how learning occurred

## Rising to expectations:

- knowing peers & instructor reading their work; high standards

# Doing the Work



**Putting forth time & effort both within & outside of class**

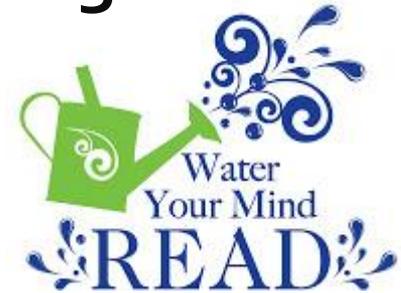
**This required:**

- **mental and physical effort**
- **a positive commitment of spirit and energy**

# Doing the Work

## Opening up to learning:

environment of trust, privacy, & sharing  
seeing peers as sources of wisdom



## Using reading to learn:

piqued interests, personal reading choices,  
used in graded weekly discussions

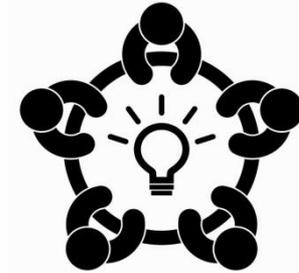
## Using writing to learn:

Improved reflection, confidence, interest, choice,  
understanding

# Making It Real



↑ awareness  
↑ knowledge  
↑ role models  
↑ relevancy  
↑ emotional  
connection



↓ fear  
↓ distance  
↓ stereotypes



# Making it Real



**Experience political processes for self:**

- see, hear, be “in the moment”

**Connect personally & professionally:**

- make family, friend, & workplace connections
- connect ideas to their own nursing past, present, & future
- find a passion

# Learning Online Together

Interact with peers, the instructor & others to construct meaning about nursing, politics, & policy together.

**Commit to learn as a team:**  
norms, collegial environment, risk sharing ideas

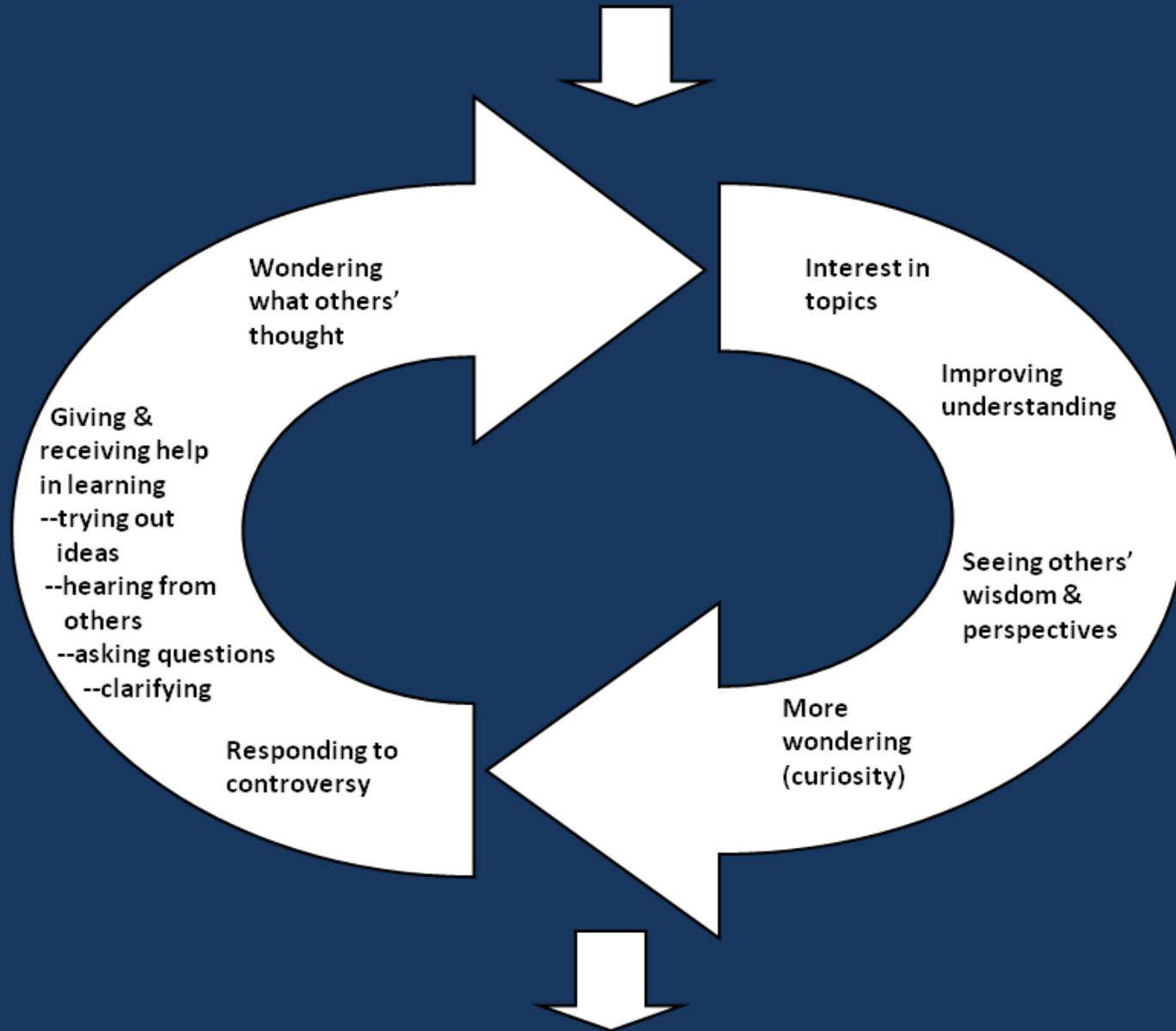
**Get a system down:**  
finding one's "groove" online, managing challenges

**Interacting with instructor:**  
actively engaged, positive involvement in DB

**Learning through peers' wisdom:**  
DB synergy generates interest



# Discussing ideas together



# Experiencing synergy of learning

# Learning Deeply

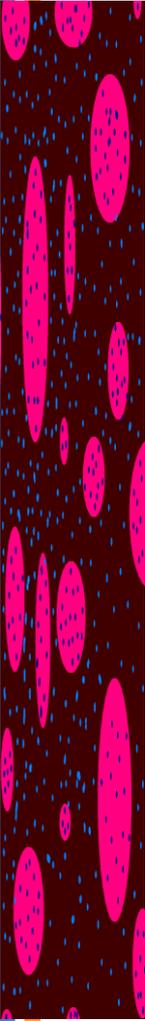
## Learning Deeply

- ↑ recognition of changes
- ↑ writing skills
- ↑ confidence
- ↑ political knowledge
- ↑ resource use
- ↑ enjoyment in learning
- ↑ involvement with others to learn
- ↑ personal connection

versus

## Learning by Checklist

- ✓ task focus
- ✓ just get done
- ✓ pull it off
- ✓ missing out on a lot
- ✓ spit out on a test



## **Pedagogy matters:**

- Be intentional about instruction
- Promote emotional & personal connections

## **Engaged teaching & learning matters:**

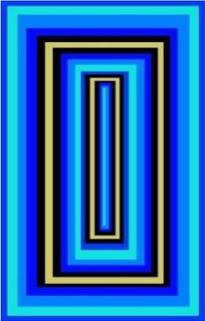
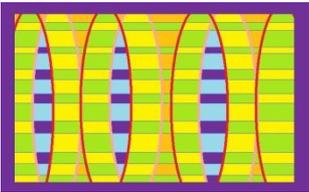
- Mix experiential with class-based activities
- ↑ students' reading, writing, talking

## **Collaborative learning matters:**

- Instructor & peer engagement
- High expectations & positive regard

# Questions?

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Art by Megan Gehrke

