**KCTL Teaching & Learning Reading Group**

**Wednesday, May 9th @ 3pm**

**KCTL (Room M391)**

**Note:** These are my suggestions for discussion starters. Feel free to supplement or replace these questions with any questions, comments and concerns that you have about the reading.

In ***Chapter 15: Resonance*** Professor X talks about how the works of literature he loves in the classroom can capture his household and his personal life (e.g., William Carlos Williams’s *This Is Just to Say*).

* Like Professor X’s poems, do the texts and ideas of our disciplines still capture our imagination when we are outside of the work we do at the college?
* Do you leave the college invigorated by the ideas, experiences and or texts that you get to explore here?

In ***Chapter 16: The Writing Workshop*** Professor X writes, “As one writer has put it rather elegantly, adjuncts ‘possess something that regular, full-time faculty members essentially lack: authenticity.’ Adjuncts are, as the title of this article puts it, ‘emissaries from the world beyond’” (p. 187).

* Based upon what you have read of Professor X would you characterize him as ‘authentic’ as he explains it here?
* Is the Professor’s implication that full-timers in academia have lost contact with “the world beyond” a fair assessment? What experience do you think causes him to say this?

Later in the chapter he writes, “I once made the mistake of editing with the class an essay written by a mother about her child’s protracted death from leukemia” (p. 194).

* How critical do we allow ourselves to be when student’s work or other communication with us deals with sensitive and personal issues?

In ***Chapter 17: Do Your Job Professor*** Professor X talks about some of the feedback he received when he wrote the original article on which this book is based. He relates, “At our college our class size is either 25 (pre-transfer) or 30 (transfer-level), and we consider it a failure if more than two students do not manage to pass. We do that by having individual meetings with each student, using collaborative learning to enhance active learning, and emphasizing multiple pathways towards learning” (p. 200).

* Is this critic realistic in his/her criticism of Professor X and of those who have more than two students fail in a class or work with students who fail more than this critic suggests that is normal?

Another critic says of Professor X, “Professor X is a white collar criminal who couldn’t qualify for the ivory tower and make it as a scholar, so he is employed to serve a screening function at the bottom of the system” (p. 200).

* Is this how the academic system treats adjuncts/part-timers (i.e., as screeners)?

In ***Chapter 18: Grading the Teacher*** Professor X asserts, “The magic of teaching is vastly overstated” (p. 215). He goes on to argue that this overstatement has lead to the dumbing-down of college and as professors of previous generations did not worry about whether their teaching was effective.

* How has higher education changed from the time that we were students?
* Has this change been positive or negative or some combination of the two?

In ***Chapter 19: On Borrowing Liberally from Other People’s Work*** the author reflects on plagiarism cases he has dealt with and he allows himself to consider for a minute whether in the process of confronting bad behavior from students whether or not he is at risk from a student who may want to lash out in violence.

* How secure do you feel with our students on the campus?
* How can we proactively protect ourselves when delivering negative messages to students?

In ***Chapter 21: Nobody Move*** Professor X argues that academia could do a lot of work to streamline the degrees/programs that it offers to students who are going into jobs in which credentials are not essential but skills are.

* Would we improve education by only giving students the courses/skills/experiences that they need to do their jobs and nothing more?

In **summary** and **final reflection** on the reading …

* What it one thought, idea or piece of information that you are left with after reading Professor X’s volume?
* If you were to write a book based upon your experiences working with students at Kingsborough Community College what would the title of the book be and why? Would you be willing to attach your real name to this hypothetical book or not and why?