



Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom

Jim Eison, Ph.D.
Adult, Career and Higher Education
University of South Florida



We Will Start Shortly

Please use the next few minutes to discuss with a partner how this observation does or does not relate to the way you teach

Tell me and I'll listen.

Show me and I'll understand.

Involve me and I'll learn.

Teton Lakota Indians



Warm-Up Activities

❖ Students are more likely to engage when they are primed to start.

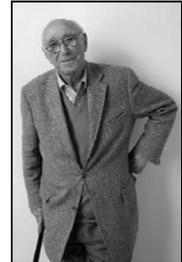
◆ Frequent use of icebreakers and warm-ups can have lasting impact.



Workshop Assumption

❖ The first objective of any act of learning, over and beyond the pleasure it may give, is that it should serve us in the future. Learning should not only take us somewhere, it should allow us later to go further more easily.

Jerome Bruner



Guiding Questions

❖ What are active learning instructional strategies?

❖ Why are active learning instructional strategies important?



Guiding Questions

❖ What prevents faculty from using active learning strategies?

❖ What are some high-impact & low-risk active learning strategies?





What Have I Just Demonstrated?

❖ **Previewing “Guiding Questions” for a class can help students**

- ◆ see its organizational structure
- ◆ find greater value in the material & activities that follow



Two Questions (Mitchell, 2001)

- ❖ **When you tell, who does the thinking?**
- ❖ **When you ask, who does the thinking?**



Your Next Question is

❖ **What instructional strategy is all but certain to**

- ◆ awaken students
- ◆ arouse attention
- ◆ focus concentration
- ◆ stimulate in-class discussion?

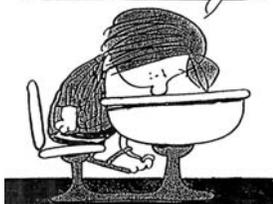


Ideas Please



One Certain Way to Increase Engagement

There is nothing like a surprise quiz to get you going!!!



Surprise Quiz: Directions

❖ **You will have five (5) minutes to work in groups of three on this. Please**

- ◆ Be clear and concise your sharing
- ◆ Use all available time
- ◆ Relax and enjoy





Surprise Quiz: Question

❖ As you now understand the term, what are “active learning instructional strategies”



Background

❖ Active learning instructional strategies involve students in doing things and thinking about the things that they are doing. (Bonwell & Eison, 1991)



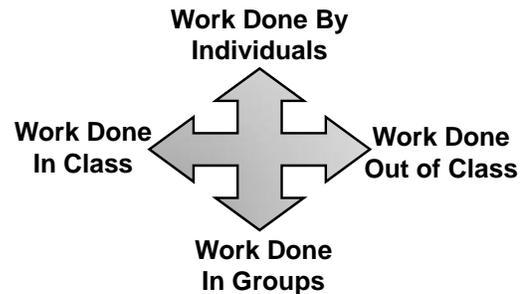
Active Learning Instructional Strategies

❖ Can be used to engage students in

- ◆ Critical and creative thinking
- ◆ Speaking with a partner, in a small group, or with the entire class
- ◆ Expressing ideas through writing
- ◆ Exploring one’s attitudes and values
- ◆ Giving and receiving feedback
- ◆ Reflecting upon the learning process



Active Learning Instructional Strategies



What Have I Just Demonstrated?

- ❖ Having students discuss important questions prior to providing your informed perspective
- ❖ Then, contrasting the two sets of ideas
- ❖ We have now examined Guiding Question One



Guiding Question Two

❖ Why are active learning instructional strategies important?





The \$64,000 Question

❖ For those who can still remember popular television games shows of the 1950's, today's question is

- ◆ What's wrong with a 50-minute lecture?



Ideas Please



What's Wrong With a 50 Minute Lecture?

❖ While a well crafted lecture offers a time efficient way to “cover a lot of content” it is not an effective way to promote student understanding and retention of new information



What's Wrong With a 50 Minute Lecture?

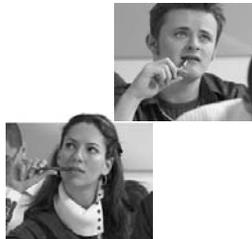
❖ The lecture method is relatively poor for maintaining attention (Bligh, 2000).



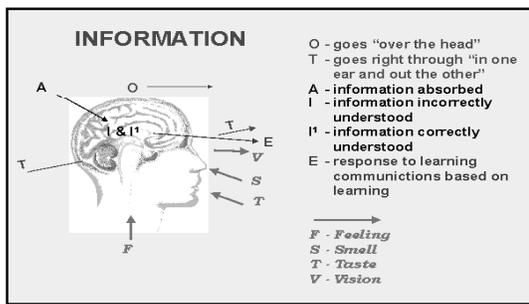
What's Wrong With a 50 Minute Lecture?

❖ During any lecture, level of student engagement will vary greatly

- ◆ Across time
- ◆ Among students



Information Transmission (Richard Hartel)





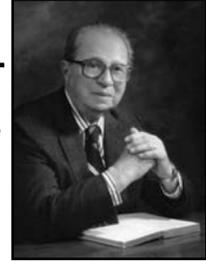
What's Wrong With a 50 Minute Lecture?

Lectures alone are too often a useless expenditure of force. The lecturer pumps laboriously into sieves. The water may be wholesome; but it runs through. A mind must work to grow (Elliot, 1869).



What's Wrong With a 50 Minute Lecture?

❖ All genuine learning is active, not passive. It involves the use of the mind, not just the memory. (Adler, 1987).



Guiding Question Three

❖ What prevents faculty from using active learning strategies?



Group Brainstorming

❖ Let's use the next three minutes to identify some of common obstacles limiting faculty use of active learning instructional strategies?



Commonly Reported Obstacles

- ❖ You cannot cover as much content
- ❖ Most faculty view themselves as good lecturers
- ❖ Active learning strategies take too much time
- ❖ Students resist non-lecture approaches



Guiding Question Four

❖ What are some high-impact and low-risk active learning instructional strategies?





Surprise Quiz: Question Two

❖ Complete the following sentence using twelve words or less

- ◆ One low-risk high-impact active learning strategy that I personally use or know of is



Make Lectures Interactive

❖ Interactive lectures are presentations that provide students with multiple brief opportunities for structured engagement.



Make Lectures Interactive

❖ Student concentration during presentations often declines after 15 minutes. Break for

- ◆ The Pause Procedure
- ◆ A ConcepTest
- ◆ A Think-Pair-Share



Another Easy Yet Powerful Way to Start

❖ Ask exciting questions



Questioning Strategies

❖ Can stimulate student

- ◆ critical thinking
- ◆ creative thinking
- ◆ curiosity



A Question to Ponder

What would you include on a “Top Three List” of the primary purposes and priorities of teaching?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



J. Michael Bishop's List

❖ What are the purposes and priorities of teaching? . . .

First, to inspire.

Second, to challenge.

Third, and only third, to impart information.



Use Clickers

❖ The thoughtful use of clickers (or, personal response systems) can energize both television audiences as well as students during lecture presentations.



Use Clickers

❖ Recent research has reported that thoughtful clicker use can

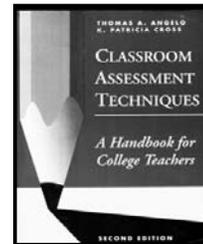
- ◆ Increase regular class attendance
- ◆ Promote deeper student understanding
- ◆ Improve classroom test performance
- ◆ Enhance students' self-confidence
- ◆ Raise student satisfaction (ratings)



Use Classroom Assessment Techniques

❖ Classroom Assessment Techniques (Angelo & Cross, 1993) are

- ◆ straightforward
- ◆ learner-centered
- ◆ teacher-directed
- ◆ used to improve learning



Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATS)

❖ CATS are commonly anonymous, brief, in-class, ungraded, formative assessment strategies. For example, the "Minute Paper" asks students

- What important question remains unanswered?
- What was the most important thing you learned during this class?



Assign Short In-Class Writing Activities

❖ In-class writing simultaneously engages attention and demands concentration





Assign Short Out-of-Class Writing Activities

❖ Short out-of-class writing activities can enhance both comprehension and long-term retention



◆ Microthemes are brief essays limited to one side of a 5" x 8" index card



Use Demonstrations Effectively

❖ An in-class demonstration's impact upon student learning can be maximized dramatically by a simple modification of procedure



Frequently Asked Questions



Concluding Thoughts

❖ Teaching is less about what the teacher does than about what the teacher gets the students to do.

David Perkins



Concluding Thoughts

❖ Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great!

Kenny Rogers.



For Additional Information Contact

Jim Eison, Ph.D.
Dept of Adult, Career and Higher Ed.
University of South Florida
4202 East Fowler Ave, EDU 162
Tampa, FL 33620
jeison@coedu.usf.edu