TEACHING STRATEGIES

Institutions of higher learning across the nation are responding to political, economic, social and technological pressures to be more responsive to students' needs and more concerned about how well students are prepared to assume future societal roles. Faculty are already feeling the pressure to lecture less, to make learning environments more interactive, to integrate technology into the learning experience, and to use collaborative learning strategies when appropriate.

Some of the more prominent strategies are outlined below. For more information about the use of these and other pedagogical approaches, contact the Program in Support of Teaching and Learning.

Lecture. For many years, the lecture method was the most widely used instructional strategy in college classrooms. Nearly 80% of all U.S. college classrooms in the late 1970s reported using some form of the lecture method to teach students (Cashin, 1990). Although the usefulness of other teaching strategies is being widely examined today, the lecture still remains an important way to communicate information.

Used in conjunction with active learning teaching strategies, the traditional lecture can be an effective way to achieve instructional goals. The advantages of the lecture approach are that it provides a way to communicate a large amount of information to many listeners, maximizes instructor control and is non-threatening to students. The disadvantages are that lecturing minimizes feedback from students, assumes an unrealistic level of student understanding and comprehension, and often disengages students from the learning process causing information to be quickly forgotten.

The following recommendations can help make the lecture approach more effective (Cashin, 1990):

1. Fit the lecture to the audience
2. Focus your topic - remember you cannot cover everything in one lecture
3. Prepare an outline that includes 5-9 major points you want to cover in one lecture
4. Organize your points for clarity
5. Select appropriate examples or illustrations
6. Present more than one side of an issue and be sensitive to other perspectives
7. Repeat points when necessary
8. Be aware of your audience - notice their feedback
9. Be enthusiastic - you don't have to be an entertainer but you should be excited by your topic.

(from Cashin, 1990, pp. 60-61)

Case Method. Providing an opportunity for students to apply what they learn in the classroom to real-life experiences has proven to be an effective way of both disseminating and integrating knowledge. The case method is an instructional strategy that engages students in active discussion about issues and problems inherent in practical application. It can highlight

fundamental dilemmas or critical issues and provide a format for role playing ambiguous or controversial scenarios.

Course content cases can come from a variety of sources. Many faculty have transformed current events or problems reported through print or broadcast media into critical learning experiences that illuminate the complexity of finding solutions to critical social problems. The case study approach works well in cooperative learning or role playing environments to stimulate critical thinking and awareness of multiple perspectives.

Discussion. There are a variety of ways to stimulate discussion. For example, some faculty begin a lesson with a whole group discussion to refresh students memories about the assigned reading(s). Other faculty find it helpful to have students list critical points or emerging issues, or generate a set of questions stemming from the assigned reading(s). These strategies can also be used to help focus large and small group discussions.

Obviously, a successful class discussion involves planning on the part of the instructor and preparation on the part of the students. Instructors should communicate this commitment to the students on the first day of class by clearly articulating course expectations. Just as the instructor carefully plans the learning experience, the students must comprehend the assigned reading and show up for class on time, ready to learn.

Active Learning. Meyers and Jones (1993) define active learning as learning environments that allow students to talk and listen, read, write, and reflect as they approach course content through problem-solving exercises, informal small groups, simulations, case studies, role playing, and other activities -- all of which require students to apply what they are learning (p. xi). Many studies show that learning is enhanced when students become actively involved in the learning process. Instructional strategies that engage students in the learning process stimulate critical thinking and a greater awareness of other perspectives. Although there are times when lecturing is the most appropriate method for disseminating information, current thinking in college teaching and learning suggests that the use of a variety of instructional strategies can positively enhance student learning. Obviously, teaching strategies should be carefully matched to the teaching objectives of a particular lesson. For more information about teaching strategies, see the list of college teaching references in Appendix N.

Assessing or grading students' contributions in active learning environments is somewhat problematic. It is extremely important that the course syllabus explicitly outlines the evaluation criteria for each assignment whether individual or group. Students need and want to know what is expected of

them. For more information about grading, see the Evaluating Student Work section contained in this Guide.

Cooperative Learning. Cooperative Learning is a systematic pedagogical strategy that encourages small groups of students to work together for the achievement of a common goal. The term 'Collaborative Learning' is often used as a synonym for cooperative learning when, in fact, it is a separate strategy that encompasses a broader range of group interactions such as developing learning communities, stimulating student/faculty discussions, and encouraging electronic exchanges (Bruffee, 1993). Both approaches stress the importance of faculty and student involvement in the learning process.

When integrating cooperative or collaborative learning strategies into a course, careful planning and preparation are essential. Understanding how to form groups, ensure positive interdependence, maintain individual accountability, resolve group conflict, develop appropriate assignments and grading criteria, and manage active learning environments are critical to the achievement of a successful cooperative learning experience. Before you begin, you may want to consult several helpful resources which are contained in Appendix N. In addition, the Program in Support of Teaching and Learning can provide faculty with supplementary information and helpful techniques for using cooperative learning or collaborative learning in college classrooms.

Integrating Technology. Today, educators realize that computer literacy is an important part of a student's education. Integrating technology into a course curriculum when appropriate is proving to be valuable for enhancing and extending the learning experience for faculty and students. Many faculty have found electronic mail to be a useful way to promote student/student or faculty/student communication between class meetings. Others use listserves or on-line notes to extend topic discussions and explore critical issues with students and colleagues, or discipline- specific software to increase student understanding of difficult concepts.

Currently, our students come to us with varying degrees of computer literacy. Faculty who use technology regularly often find it necessary to provide some basic skill level instruction during the first week of class. In the future, we expect that need to decline. For help in integrating technology into a course curriculum contact the Program in Support of Teaching and Learning or the Instructional Development Office (IDO) at 703-993-3141. In addition, watch for information throughout the year about workshops and faculty conversations on the integration of technology, teaching and learning.

Distance Learning. Distance learning is not a new concept. We have all experienced learning outside of a structured classroom setting through television, correspondence courses, etc. Distance learning or distance education as a teaching pedagogy, however, is an important topic of discussion on college campuses today. Distance learning is defined as 'any form of teaching and learning in which the teacher and learner are not in the same place at the same time' (Gilbert, 1995).

Obviously, information technology has broadened our concept of the learning environment. It has made it possible for learning experiences to be extended beyond the confines of the traditional classroom. Distance learning technologies take many forms such as computer simulations, interactive collaboration/discussion, and the creation of virtual learning environments connecting regions or nations. Components of distance learning such as email, listserves, and interactive software have also been useful additions to the educational setting.

For more information about distance learning contact the Instructional Development Office at 703-993-3141 (Fairfax Campus) and watch for workshops and faculty discussions on the topic throughout the year.

http://www.gmu.edu/resources/facstaff/part-time/strategy.html

In a related article: The role of multiple teaching Linda C. Hodges and Lilia C. Harvey

https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00897990297a

Evidence based teaching strategies. Shaun Killian

http://www.evidencebasedteaching.org.au/evidence-based-teaching-strategies/

Teaching Strategies- Learning styles

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNxCporOofo