



College Teaching: Techniques to Reinforce Learning

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Connection Activities – opening activities that connect you to what you already know or what you are about to learn.

- Pop Quiz – 1-2 question quiz on material
- Pre & Post – Use a pre- and post-assessment tool to assess what they know before the class and after the class.
- Shout Out – share with large group what students want to learn.
- Pair Share - quickly introduce yourself to the person next to you. Tell them what you already know about the subject and what you hope to learn.
- Table Talk - in small groups discuss what you want to take away from the learning experience.
- Introduce - stand and find someone in the room whom you don't know. Introduce yourself and discuss what you want to do with the information you will learn today.
- Quick Write - on an index card, write down any questions you have regarding the readings or a topic-related question.
- Circle the Best - pass out list of learning objectives have students circle the learning objectives that most interest them & share.
- Standing survey – ask others at table what they want to learn, summarize and share with larger group
- Learning Log – record what you know about the topic before the session, what you feel are the important topics during the session, and how you might use these concepts after the session

Concepts – important facts that learners need to know (direct instruction)

- Graphic Organizers –
 - Mind-Mapping – write topic in middle of paper and put facts, questions, comments as bubbles or shapes around the topic. Connect with lines, arrows, pictures.
 - Windowpane – learners fold blank paper into 4, 8, or 16 boxes or windowpanes. They summarize or draw and image of an important fact in each box.
 - Fill-in-the blanks – learners fill in a pre-made worksheet that is missing important words or phrases
 - Blackout-bingo – using a windowpane worksheet, learners print a topic-related word or phrase in each box from a list you provide. When they hear your explain a concept from their “bingo” sheet, they circle or cross it out. When they have all boxes marked they can yell, “Bingo!” and receive a prize.
- Three Before Me – when a learner poses a question, rather than answer it, take three answers from the group.
- Beat the Clock – You have 60 seconds to quickly write down 10 facts about the topic
- One Person Experts – Assign each person in a group a section of the readings, a key phrase, or a specific section of a worksheet. Each individual reads the material, researches the topic or completes the workshop. That person is now the “expert” on that topic and shares the summary with the group. (you can also assign small groups one topic and they work together to become group experts and then share with the larger group)
- Concept Center – table, wall or designated area where participants review a specific topic or concept or practice a topic-related skill

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- Game Center – set up reinforcing games and have students play them during breaks or rotate through the games
- Wall Center – Post charts throughout the room with titles such as “What you didn’t know but wanted to learn” or “Little Known Facts.” Have the students add their ideas and then discuss what you can do with the information.
- Computer Center – have students do internet searches, write a blog, take a pop quiz, add to a Wiki related to the topic.
- Concept Collage – have students bring photos, newspaper or web articles, magazine clippings, website URLs, or topic-related objects to class. Have them create a collage of the information.
- Learner-created center – have the students develop their own learning centers. They can create flashcards, discussion topics, quiz questions, or games that inform the topic.

Body Breaks – physical movement or mental breaks to give the brain and body a break

- Jokes
- Cartoons
- Musical Interludes
- Youtube Clips/Commercial Break
- Micro Stretches – move your toe, eyelid, finger, mouth
- Macro Stretches – arm, leg, stand, walk around
- Deep Breaths

Practice & Reinforcing Activities (can be done during a session, during a break, one upon return from a break) – active review strategies in which you apply what you learned.

- Brain Breaks - while on break, ask three people “What is the most important concept you have learned so far?”
- Pop Quiz - make up content related questions and then quiz the person next to you.
- Chart It - on the post-it note, write down what have learned so far and stick it to the chart on the wall.
- Create “early finish” activities for those who finish early.
- Think, Pair, Share – think about how the information informs your experience, discuss your experiences in pairs, share the key ideas with the larger group.
 - Turn to your neighbor and tell him/her three things you learned in the last 30 minutes.
 - On a piece of paper draw a picture of representing a key point and share.
 - Think of a motion that could represent what you learned. Share with your neighbor without talking.
 - Share one way you could use the information you just learned
 - If your job depended on remembering what you heard, how would you explain it to your supervisor?
 - Write one word that captures the essence of what you learned. Show your word to at least 5 other people.

Practice & Reinforcing Activities Continued (can be done during a session, during a break, one upon return from a break) – active review strategies in which you apply what you learned.

- Yellow Ribbon – pass out a ribbon, piece or string or long string of licorice. As you cover an important point, tell the learners to tie a knot in the item. Do this 4-6 times. At the end of the lecture have them share with a partner the significance of each knot.

- Red light/Green light – pass out a red and green index card. Throughout the session, ask yes/no questions and have them hold up the card that corresponds with their answer. You can also use the cards for agree/disagree, love it/hate it, okay/no way.
- Rhyme - with a partner, come up with a rhyme or poem to discuss what you have learned. Be prepared to share with the larger group.
- Shout Outs – encourages learners to state what they know or have learned by orally responding to a question; shout out three ways to use the information we have covered. Shout out one word that summarizes what you have learned. Tell me 10 key ideas you learned today.
- Think & Write – students take a moment to think about their thoughts and jot them down on paper; students take a moment to think about their thoughts and jot them down on paper; Write one sentence that summarizes what you learned; on an index card write a topic related question on one side and the answer on the back – swap questions with those at your table.
- Signals - hand or body motions; On a scale of 1-5, ask students how strongly they agree with a topic related statement. Have them raise their hands displaying their score; give student index cards with true written on one side and false on the other. Ask true/false questions related to the topic; stand if you believe a fact is true, false remain standing; on a scale of 1-5, one means you need more clarification, five means you've got it. Show by holding up fingers where you are in understanding this topic.
- Doodles – create images to represent a topic; draw a picture that represents the key topics; create a logo that will help you remember a key fact.
- Mark-Up – students mark their written material in a way that they will remember; on your notes draw a circle around the most important words; provide a list of key points from the readings – have student prioritize the statements or argue which are most important.
- Cross It Out – provide a series of statements related to the content. Students cross out any statements that are false/unrelated
- Fill It In – provide a series of fill-in-the blank statements that students can fill in during your lecture
- Raffle Prizes – for those who can answer content-related questions
- Rubrics – have students help create assignment rubrics
- Gallery walk – post chart paper around the room. Depending on the topic, each chart paper could represent one idea, one step, one skill. Have participants move around the room and add their ideas to the sheets.
- Learner presentation – students present what they learned
- Teach backs – students teach back the major concepts
- Learner created visual aid – students create visual aids demonstrating the key ideas
- Learner created skit – learners role play or create skits demonstrating what they learned
- Wall charts – students add comments to charts posted throughout the room
- Demonstration – student demonstrate a concept or how the concept will be put into practice
- Assign readings – students teach the key points related to assigned readings
- Case studies
- Movie Clips, Games, Songs, or Activities that implement or bring to life the key concepts

Conclusion/Action Plans – give you practice in summarizing and evaluating what you learned and how you will put the learning into practice.

- One Sentence Summary – in pairs summarize what you have learned in one sentence.
- Chart It - Hang chart paper on door and ask student to write what they have learned so far on a post-it and stick on the paper as they leave

- Index It - On an index card write down any remaining questions or write down the most important thing you learned
- Ticket Out – as students leave have them share the main idea of the class
- Hot Potato - Have group stand in circle and pass a “hot potato. “ When the object is tossed to the student, he or she must share what was learned, appreciated about the learning experience, what they plan to do with the information
- Walk about – have students walk around the room or hallway discussing what they learned and how they plan to use the information.
- Quiz – test the information via quizzes, short answer
- One legged – stand on one leg and share either what they learned and who they will share it with, how they plan to use the information, what they enjoyed
- Homeplay – “Tonight at home, talk with a friend or family member about three things you learned today and how you are going to use those three things in your life.”
- Snowball Fight – on a blank piece of paper each person writes one thing that he/she is going to do with what was learned. Crumple into a ball and have a snowball fight. Pick up a ball and read or take home.

Action Plans

- Pair Share - turn to the person next to you and finish the statement, “I plan to . . . “ Share how the student will use the information.
- Index It - on front of a postcard, students write what they plan to do with the learned information. On back, write mailing address. Mail the cards to the students.
- Action Plan - provide an action plan worksheet.

NOTE: Activities adopted from S. Bowman, Professional Trainer and Speaker (www.bowperson.com)

References/Resources

Bowman, S. (2005). *How to give it so they get it!* San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

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