

Welcome to volume two of the Faculty Development Committee Newsletter

Welcome, Faculty!

We all strive to be better at what we do. Once a semester, the Faculty Development Committee is determined to fill your inbox with fantastic ideas to help you be a better teacher and faculty member. Happy teaching!

**Supportively,
The Faculty Development Committee
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Classroom Strategies, part 1

This fascinating article explores how to effectively use humor in the classroom.

Excerpt: "Humor is a valuable teaching tool for establishing a classroom climate conducive to learning. This article identifies opportunities for incorporating humor in the college classroom, reviews the impact of humor on learning outcomes, and suggests guidelines for the appropriate use of humor. Of particular interest is humor in "dread courses" which students may avoid due to a lack of self-confidence, perceived difficulty of the material or a previous negative experience in a content area. Appropriate and timely humor in the college classroom can foster mutual openness and respect and contribute to overall teaching effectiveness."

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~slm/AdjCI/Startclass/Humor.html>

Classroom Strategies, part 2

Here is some information about teaching poetry to students who speak English as a second language. It offers practical tips for reading and writing poetry in the classroom.

Excerpt: "Although most ESL students may be years away from understanding a Shakespearean sonnet, there are many ways to introduce students to poetry and use it to boost their language skills."

<http://www.suite101.com/content/teaching-poetry-to-esl-students-a117535>

Classroom Strategies, part 3

Here's a very easy-to-follow guide to very basic Power Point. For those of you who are (like me) just starting on Power Point, this may help.

Excerpt: "In this article, I will attempt to share some basic tips to help you grab and maintain your audience's attention and communicate your message as succinctly as possible with the use of Microsoft PowerPoint 2007.

<http://www.suite101.com/content/the-art-of-making-effective-powerpoint-presentations-a353354>

Classroom Strategies, part 4

Finally, here are some successful strategies for implementing group work in class. This one doesn't even require clicking on a link.

The jigsaw technique

Have you struggled with group work in class? The jigsaw technique can be a useful, well-structured template for carrying out effective in-class group work. The class is divided into several teams, with each team preparing separate but related assignments. When all team members are prepared, the class is re-divided into mixed groups, with one member from each team in each group. Each person in the group teaches the rest of the group what he/she knows, and the group then tackles an assignment together that pulls all of the pieces together to form the full picture (hence the name "jigsaw").

The gallery walk

The gallery walk is a cooperative learning strategy in which the instructor devises several questions/problems and posts each question/problem at a different table or at a different place on the walls (hence the name "gallery"). Students form as many groups as there are questions, and each group moves from question to question (hence the name "walk"). After writing the group's response to the first question, the group rotates to the next position, adding to what is already there. At the last question, it is the group's responsibility to summarize and report to the class.

Effective discussion

Discussion is an excellent way to engage students in thinking and analyzing or in defending one side of an issue, rather than listening to lecture. Students must also respond to one another, rather than interacting intellectually only with the instructor. Good discussion can be difficult to generate, however. Clicking "more information" below will take you to some tips for having a good discussion in class and a sample template for class discussion.

Concept sketches

Concept sketches (different from concept *maps*) are sketches or diagrams that are concisely annotated with short statements that describe the processes, concepts, and interrelationships shown in the sketch. Having students generate their own concept sketches is a powerful way for students to process concepts and convey them to others. Concept sketches can be used as preparation for class, as an in-class activity, in the field or lab, or as an assessment tool.

Debates

Debates can be a very useful strategy for engaging students in their own learning. Debates force students to deal with complexity and "gray areas", and they are rich in imbedded content. Debates can also help provide relevancy of course material to everyday issues, which can improve student learning. Debates also improve student's oral communication skills.

Role playing

Role-playing and simulations in class can be an excellent way to engage students. A well-constructed role-playing or simulation exercise can emphasize the real world and require students to become deeply involved in a topic. Clicking "more information" below will take you to a discussion, at the Starting Point site, of teaching with role playing.