

Instruction Discussion Group: 9/26/03

Keeping Students Engaged

I. Setting the Stage

A. What do you do when students enter the room?

- Greet them and ask questions
- Introduce yourself
- Give them a handout or put one at every computer

B. What do you include in your introduction?

- Class goals
- What, exactly, they will be doing during the class
- How you plan to run the class – take questions during or at the end, will ask questions etc.
- Who you are
- What you know in terms of their class/assignment and how the session will tie into that and help them

II. Class Content

A. How much do you include? Is there such a thing as too much?

B. How do you organize the class to keep people engaged?

- Chunking
- Good transitions (lights on and off, summing up, etc.)
- Use active learning to break up lectures

C. Once you've determined content and order, how do you make it interesting?

- Picking relevant, interesting, even fun topics – know your audience
- Use their examples instead of your own
- Use non-library language to explain library concepts
- Be spontaneous and flexible and ready to change on the spot – if students know what you plan to teach them, teach something else – if a good discussion begins, go with it and sacrifice something you had planned to do

III. Presentation Style

A. Everyone has seen someone they think is a good presenter/teacher. What did they do that makes you think they are good?

- Tone
- Move around the room
- Pace of class
- Body language
- Smiling

- Work with what you've got – admit you have a personality and make it an asset – are you energetic? Shy? Funny? How can you work with that?
- Be interested in what you're saying, even if you've said it a thousand times before

B. What are effective ways to ask and answer questions? What have you tried?

- Spread them throughout the class
- You can call on individuals
- Ask people to raise their hands if they seem too shy to answer as individuals
- Never assume anything! For example, instead of saying “so you all understand what I mean when I say subject heading?” try “What is a subject heading?” -- and don't be afraid to wait for an answer
- Ask people to reiterate complex concepts – explain something and then ask a ? about it “so, I want to make sure you all understand what I just explained. When you are searching for an article in print in the library, what do you search for? The title of the journal or the title of the article?”
- Use questions to evaluate student learning along the way
- Ask a variety of questions from the specific to the general – ask groups and individuals – ask what they are working on – ask them to explain things to you!

V. Trouble-shooting

A. Students often come into the class and immediately get online while waiting for class to start. What do you think of that? How do you get their attention?

B. What do you do when students are talking in class about unrelated material/being disruptive.

C. What do you do when they aren't responding (they are IMing, not looking at you, extremely quiet, look glazed over)