

Introducing the new technologies in the Classroom: Is that a way to achieve “Active Learning”? Lets see deeper into curriculum development for the Gifted Students

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Abstract

Use of new techniques in the classroom is vital because of their powerful impact upon students' learning. For example, several studies have shown that students prefer strategies promoting active learning to traditional lectures. Other research studies evaluating students' achievement have demonstrated that many strategies promoting active learning are comparable to lectures in promoting the mastery of content but superior to lectures in promoting the development of students' skills in thinking and writing. Further, some cognitive research has shown that a significant number of individuals have learning styles best served by pedagogical techniques other than lecturing. Therefore, a thoughtful and scholarly approach to skillful teaching requires that faculty become knowledgeable about the many ways strategies promoting active learning have been successfully used across the disciplines. Further, each faculty member should engage in self-reflection, exploring his or her personal willingness to experiment with alternative approaches to instruction. Several additional strategies promoting active learning have been similarly shown to influence favorably students' attitudes and achievement. Visual-based instruction, for example, can provide a helpful focal point for other interactive techniques. In-class writing across the disciplines is another productive way to involve students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing. Two popular instructional strategies based on problem-solving model include the case study method of instruction and guided design. Other active learning pedagogies worthy of instructors' use include cooperative learning, debates, drama, role playing and simulation, and peer teaching. In short, the published literature on alternatives to traditional classroom presentations provides a rich menu of different approaches faculty can readily add to their repertoire of instructional skills. Currently, most published articles on active learning have been descriptive accounts rather than empirical investigations, many are out of date, either chronologically or methodologically, and a large number of important conceptual issues have never been explored. New qualitative and quantitative research should examine strategies that enhance students' learning from presentations; explore the impact of previously overlooked, yet educationally significant, characteristics of students, such as gender, different learning styles, or stage of intellectual development; and be disseminated in journals widely read by faculty. Therefore, curriculum designers need to look for ways of linking subject-matter to students own experience, and concentrate on the developmental structure of the subject-matter (that is, the sequence in which the subject-matter is most easily and naturally learned).

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