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Learning Teaching & Assessment

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Sharing Tricks of the Trade

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Sharing Tricks of the Trade

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This activity is used in a 3-hour workshop entitled 'Designing Knockout Interactive Lectures!' as part of the PG Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching in DIT. It is designed to take place in a 30-minute slot within the workshop.

Ingredients:

4 Postcards, Markers, Activity Ideas Sheet, VLE access

Method: Activity Format

- On a postcard, four key questions are listed – one per card:

1. How do you encourage & support your students to reflect and review their learning in your discipline?
2. How do you encourage & support your students to apply Theory to Practice in your discipline and make connections?
3. How do you encourage & support your students to move deeper in their learning?
4. How do you encourage & support your students' note-taking?

- In small groups of four participants, discuss each other's experience of using this form of activity in your own class [tips from your experience/lessons learnt/missed opportunities], and share one resource that you use to support your students' learning in this area (15 mins)
- Feedback session to whole group; then the ideas they come up with are added to the list below (15 mins); this is then posted to their VLE for the PG Diploma module.

1.   How do you encourage & support your students to reflect and review their learning in your discipline?

IDEA 1: Planning for Review

'Take two minutes to plan out what further work you need to do on this topic – what you need to read, try out, get practice on . . .'

or

3:2:1: Review

- After the class, have each student record three things he/she learned from the lesson
- Next, have students record two things that they found interesting and that they'd like to learn more about
- Then, have students record one question they still have about the material
- Finally, the most important step is to review the students' responses

IDEA 2: Silent reflection

'Take three minutes to think about what we have dealt with so far. Stay silent so as not to interfere with others' reflection'.

IDEA 3: Forming an overview
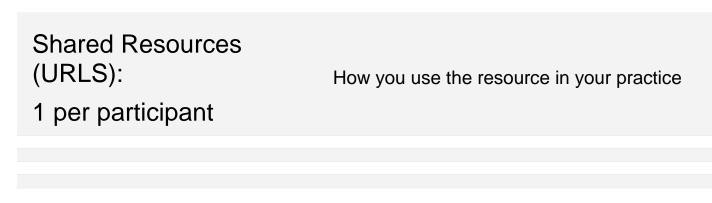
Towards the end of the class:

'What do you think were the two or three (whatever is the appropriate number) key points made in this class?

Write them down and compare notes with your neighbour'.

IDEA 4: **Bags of Inspiration**

Tell the students to bring in a bag from home (any bag). Then tell them to have it filled with one or two items that remind them of how they feel about their current project (these can be visual aids). Tell them to bring this bag with

the item(s) to the reflection session, and have them explain their items to the rest of the class.

Shared Resources (URLS): 1 per participant	How you use the resource in your practice

2. **How do you encourage & support your students to apply Theory to Practice in your discipline and make connections?**

IDEA 1: Apply this concept

'In threes, analyse this case / problem / text using the concepts I have just outlined'.

IDEA 2: Engagement with the debate (1)

'I've presented one theory or model. Suggest one way in which it could be tested empirically'.

IDEA 3: Engagement with the debate (2)

'I've presented one theory or model. Offer one critique or counter example.'

IDEA 4: What? So what? Now what?

This is a method for sequencing thinking that moves from description to analysis to action. It can take the form of an in-class writing assignment, discussion, or creative project (e.g. storyboard, cartoon, poster, etc). This can be useful for debriefing after a learning experience, for articulating goals or for developing strategies for achieving goals.

Begin by asking students to describe an experience, such as an excursion, a class discussion, or personal life event: What happened? What did you do?

Next, ask them to analyze the experience: Why does it matter to you? How is it significant within the context of this class? Finally, ask students to take action: What have you learned? What will you do differently? What will you use on other projects/modules/your future profession?

Shared Resources (URLS): 1 per participant	How you use the resource in your practice

3. **How do you encourage & support your students to move deeper in their learning?**

   IDEA 1: Comparing

   'Now I've outlined these two theories, what are the most important similarities and differences between them? Make notes on this for a couple of minutes'.

   IDEA 2: Prediction (part way through a derivation of proof)

   'What is the next stage? Note down what you think it will be'.

   IDEA 3: Setting a question (more advanced)

   'What would be a good question which would test your understanding of what I've said so far?'

   IDEA 4: Socratic Questioning

   Lead the students through a series of questions in the following stages: conceptual clarification; probing assumptions; probing rationale, reasons and evidence; questioning viewpoints/perspectives; probing implications & consequences.

Shared Resources (URLS): 1 per participant	How you use the resource in your practice

4. **How do you encourage your students' note-taking?**

IDEA 1: Read your own notes

Say to students – *'Take two minutes to look at your notes. Check them, fill in gaps, make sure you understand them'*

IDEA 2: Read another's notes

'Swap notes with the person next to you and see what they have written about. You may spot things you could add to your notes when you get them back'.

IDEA 3: Write down one or two questions

'I'd like you to write down one or two questions you have at this point in the lecture. Get the question exactly right so that it addresses what you are really interested in or confused about. Take the questions you have written down and ask them of the people all around you until you have satisfactory answers'.

IDEA 4: Dual Notes

Work in pairs, one take notes, the other listens. 10 minutes at end of class given for pairs to consolidate the work and make sense of it.

Shared Resources (URLS):

1 per participant	How you use the resource in your practice

Special Notes: The focus of this activity clearly can shift to other key pedagogical areas/strategies for exploration with academic staff, depending on school/institutional focus.

Another option is to run this activity as 'The Gallery Walk'

The gallery walk is a cooperative learning strategy in which the lecturer 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. Have each group keep the same coloured marker so you know at a glace which group has written the most!

Acknowledgements:

Generally, to all my colleagues in the LTTC.

'Bags of Inspiration' activity has been adapted from an exercise by Prof. James Wolf 1998). '3:2:1' has been adapted from the Teacher Toolkit.

References

▪   Reflection – Here you will find a selection of articles and sites describing and discussing teacher reflection and providing a variety of perspectives:

https://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/groupwork/docs/Reflection.pdf

https://prezi.com/z-iozettlllo/the-reflective-school-by-peter-pappas/

http://www.eteachblog.com/being-a-reflective-practitioner/

▪   Teaching to Promote Deeper Understanding: http://cosmos.phy.tufts.edu/~zirbel/ScienceEd/Teaching-for-Conceptual-Change.pdf

▪   Do Your Students Take Good Notes? http://www.chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/do-your-students-take-good-notes/62864?cid=wc&utm_source=wc&utm_medium=en&elqTrackId=57dff6826c2045b9ad58f024effceaf9&elq=3febb846e7c64070b8445a52f5a19b8c&elqaid=10849&elqat=1&elqCampaignId=4125

- Helping Students Take Effective Lecture
  Notes: http://digest.bps.org.uk/2015/05/most-students-struggle-to-take.html

- The Cornell Note-Taking Strategy: http://lsc.cornell.edu/study-skills/cornell-note-taking-system/

MSOR Connections Vol. 9 No. 1 (2009) by Challis, Robinson & Thomlinson which addresses this issue. It is available online: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/msor.9.1h2.pdf