

RESEARCH WATCH

As the school year begins, it's a good idea to review some research findings likely to make faculty lectures more effective. Who better to give that review than a leading light of cooperative learning? As quoted in a recent issue of the *Forum*, though known for her expertise in small group work, Barbara Millis uses lecture whenever it's the best pedagogy for the teaching challenge at hand. Close review of these "tips" on making lectures more effective, however, suggests that perhaps a melding of one with the other many times works best of all.

Eight Ways To Enhance Your Lectures

Barbara Millis

At times information must be transmitted orally to a passive listening audience. But research has shown that after 10 to 20 minutes of continuous lecture, assimilation falls off rapidly. If the teacher must rely on the oral presentation of material, these techniques enhance learner retention.

Eight Examples:

1. Lecture/Rhetorical Questioning

Talk in 7- to 10-minute segments, pause, ask pre-planned rhetorical questions; learners record their answers in their notes.

2. Surveys with Exemplifier

Pause, ask directly for a show of hands: "Raise your hand if you agree . . . disagree . . . , etc." Ask for a volunteer to speak for each response group.

3. Turn to Your Partner and . . .

Pause, ask each to turn to the person next to them and share examples of the point just made or

complete a given phrase or sentence.

4. Halting Time

Present complex material or directions and then stop so learners have time to think or carry out directions. Visually check to see whether the class appears to understand. If they do, continue.

5. Explication de Texte

By reading and analyzing passages from the text aloud, learners can see higher-order thinking skills and that "criticism" is a legitimate intellectual exercise.

6. Guided Lecture

Students listen to 15 to 20 minutes of lecture without taking notes. At the end, they spend five minutes recording all they can recall. The next step involves learners in small discussion groups reconstructing the lecture conceptually with supporting data, preparing complete lecture notes, using the instructor to resolve questions that arise.

7. Immediate Mastery Quiz

When a regular immediate mastery test is included in the last few minutes of the period, learners retain almost twice as much material, both factual and conceptual.

8. Story Telling

Stories, metaphor, and myth catch people deeply within, so that listeners are no longer functioning as tape recorders subject to the above information overload limits. What human beings have in common is revealed in myth; stories allow the listener to seek an experience of being alive in them and find clues to answers within themselves. The 10- to 20-minute limit no longer applies. |||

Source: *A Brief Summary of the Best Practices in Teaching*, compiled by Tom Drummond.

For more teaching tips, visit <http://workplace.unr.edu/category/faculty-focus/teaching-learning/>.

Contact:

Barbara Millis, Director
Excellence in Teaching Program
University of Nevada—Reno
E-mail: millis@unr.edu

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—James Rhem
Executive Editor