Teaching Students to Ask Questions

As students learn to ask their own questions, they become more engaged, take greater ownership of their learning, and learn more deeply. Using this method, the instructor plays a different role. The teacher prompts students to ask questions around a focused topic – as many as they can – without stopping, giving examples, discussing or judging responses. Then students can identify open and closed questions, prioritize, reflect, and identify the questions that will uncover the most information or content.

The practice results in students being more engaged, taking ownership of their learning, and learning more; which is shown by improved quality in their work.

To find out more, read the materials linked here:


• The Right Question Institute: http://rightquestion.org/

Historically Thinking – Create Your Own Activity

The National Archives, already a wealth of information, has added something new. Docs Teach is an activity-creating tool that helps students to develop historical thinking skills. Instructors can create interactive learning activities based on primary source documents and images. The seven tools linked below are: Focusing on Details, Making Connections, Mapping History, Seeing the Big Picture, Weighing the Evidence, and Interpreting Data.

Using these, you will be able to create primary source evaluation activities.

• The National Archives Experience. DOCS Teach. Web. 28 Nov. 2012.
Creating a Framework for Student Learning

Educators who are experts in their fields often have never studied teaching techniques. At some point, educators may have a class that just doesn’t perform well using strategies that have worked in the past. The article linked here offers some ways to assess what happens in the classroom.

According to Dr. Caruana, the higher the stakes for the assignment, the more up-front work, or “scaffolding,” you need to build to prepare students for the assignment. She suggests taking your major assessments and creating scaffolds for each one.

Here are a few suggestions provided in the article:

- Briefly describe each assignment and include the skills you will evaluate.
- List the prerequisite skills necessary to successfully complete each assignment.
- Decide whether these prerequisite skills are things the students should have already mastered or not.
- Create mini assignments and build them into your course to give opportunities for your students to master these prerequisite skills.


Essay Writers for Hire

The proliferation of essay-writing services raises real concerns for educators. It is possible for students to hire online companies that will do all of their coursework from exams to papers. These “hired writers” do a great job, and their work is beyond detection by any plagiarism tools. In fact, these companies claim “70% of students use essay-writing services at least once.” Such claims bring up troubling questions.

Why do students no longer value learning to write and do research? Is it because information on almost any topic is available with the click of a button? Do we, as educators, need to rethink the methods we use to assess learning? Also, why are people with a master’s degree or Ph.D. participating in such behavior?


Custom Essay Meister: http://www.customessaymeister.com/
Making Writing Interesting

Lois Roma-Deeley, a 2012 Outstanding Community College Professor of the Year and creative writing professor at Paradise Valley Community College in Arizona, is always exploring ways to make writing more interesting for her students. She now uses a technique called ekphrasis, teaming up student writers with student artists who collaborate on a work and present the process and the final piece to the class.


Just For Fun

The link below will open a video of optical illusions by Richard Wiseman. Some of these are old, but there are enough newer illusions in this two-and-a-half minute video to spark your curiosity.


Blackboard Learn Resources

Listed below are some resources that you can use ANYTIME to get help with Blackboard Learn.

- TRCC Faculty Blackboard Resources – This is a list of short videos and step-by-step guides to assist you with specific items on Blackboard Learn. http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/Div_IT/EducationalTechnology/Faculty_Bb.shtml
- Blackboard Learn Faculty Orientation Course – All faculty are enrolled in this course. You will see it under the “Courses in which you are enrolled” list when you login to Blackboard.
  - Self-Paced Modules – Learning modules or folders on each tool.
- Connecticut Community Colleges EdTech Videos - http://www.youtube.com/ctccedtechtraining
- IITT Course Cart: Online Registration System for Faculty and Staff Training - http://www.commnet.edu/academics/iitt/coursecart.asp
- On Demand Learning Center: Video tutorials that can help supplement your users get trained. - http://ondemand.blackboard.com/
Techy Tip

Symbolab
Symbolab is a new semantic search engine created for mathematicians and scientists. Instead of searching for text, this search engine employs algorithms designed to search for meaning. It can be a useful search engine, especially for mathematics students. When you type in an equation, you get results as links and graphs, when appropriate.

You can type in an equation (y=3x + 4), text (integration by parts), or both (proof a² + b⁵ = c³).

- Symbolab - http://symbolab.com/

Call for Articles and Events!

We are looking for articles for future IDEA Center newsletters. If you would like to submit an article, please e-mail Nina Stein at nstein@trcc.commnet.edu.

If you have an event that you would like included in the “Calendar of Events” section of the newsletter, please send the information to Nina Stein at the above e-mail address. Please include the name of the event, facilitator, location, date, and time.

Help Adult Learners Stay in School

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, students 25 and older makeup the largest group attending college this year. Just because these adults attend college does not mean they will graduate and earn a degree or certificate. The Chronicle of Higher Education stated that some college completion rates may be as low as 18%. Family responsibilities, employment, and finances all contribute to adult students’ struggles to complete a degree.

The Apollo Research Institute conducted a study called To Graduate or Drop Out? This study found that many adult learners are concerned about similar things such as not being capable of earning a degree and taking time away from family and friends.

Dr. Wilen-Daugenti suggests 4 steps to help these adult learners complete a program of study:
1. Have a plan,
2. Assess your investment,
3. Bolster your support networks, and
4. Use your college’s resources and create new social networks.

2 Books on Engagement

We have 2 books in the IDEA Center for faculty and staff to borrow on engagement. *Student Engagement Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty* by Elizabeth Barkley and *Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom* by John Bean.

*Student Engagement Techniques* is broken up into 3 sections: 1) a conceptual framework for understanding student engagement, 2) tips and strategies, and 3) techniques. This resource provides many tips, strategies, and techniques for various disciplines. There are examples, online implementation, and extensions to fit many different teaching styles.

*Engaging Ideas* provides information about connections between thinking and writing; designing problem-based assignments; coaching students as learners, thinkers, and writers; and reading, commenting on, and grading student writing. This resource shows teachers in any discipline how to incorporate integrating critical thinking and writing-across-the-curriculum approaches to their courses. This newer edition also includes information on blended learning, online learning, and quantitative/scientific literacy.

Qwizdom – Quandry Game

Qwizdom is the student response system that the IDEA Center has for faculty and staff to borrow to use with students, faculty and staff. Using Qwizdom engages and motivates students, providing students with instant feedback, and help instructors record and track student performance. Qwizdom can be used two different ways: 1) as a normal presentation where one question is shown at a time and 2) in game mode. Quandry is one of the 4 games available for instructors to play with their students. It is a Jeopardy-like game where students select various dollar amount questions from a game board. From talking with instructors, I know some of you already use a Jeopardy game with your students. Here is a way to play a Jeopardy-like game using technology.

Instructors create a PowerPoint presentation with 1 question on each slide. Students can get into groups and earn points for their team for each correct answer. To the right is a screen shot of the Quandry board and below that is an example of a PPT slide with a multiple choice question.

If you are interested in using Quandry with your students, please contact Nina Stein, nstein@trcc.comnnet.edu. She will work with you to set-up your PPT and teach you how to use Qwizdom.
**Change in date and time.

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<th>Course</th>
<th>Facilitator/Contact</th>
<th>Room</th>
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<td>Getting Started with Bb Learn</td>
<td>N. Stein</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>12/11</td>
<td>10AM – 12PM</td>
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<td>Brownbag Workshop: How Do I Convert a F2F Course to a Hybrid Course?</td>
<td>N. Stein</td>
<td>B-214</td>
<td>12/13**</td>
<td>12:30 – 1:30PM</td>
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**Look for more Brown Bag Workshops in 2013!**

Can’t attend any of the workshops above? Don’t worry! You can go online anytime to [www.go2knowledge.org](http://www.go2knowledge.org) to participate in on-demand professional development.

*If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.* ~John Dewey