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Rosemary Tyrrell, Ed.D.

Director of Faculty Development

Contents

Seven Specific Techniques

Opening Question

One effective technique is to open your presentation with a question. An opening question allows your audience to get focused. It gives you an opportunity to set the tone, and it sends the message that your presentation will be interactive. It also allows you gauge the initial interest level of your audience. It can be helpful to know immediately if your audience is receptive.

Focused Listing

Ask the participants to list anything they can come up with in a short period of time. You can move about the room while the learners are writing to get a feel for what they are writing. Briefly reviewing the common themes in the writing is one method of closing the activity. You can also ask some of the learners to share their answers. Focused listing can be done in just a few minutes, and it can give you important information on how to tailor the remaining part of the presentation to the learners.

Think-Pair-Share

"Think-Pair-Share" is a terrific technique when lecture is the primary method for delivering content. This technique lets you engage students on an individual level, then in pairs, and finally as an entire group. "Think-Pair-Share" has three basic steps. First, you ask individual learners to reflect or write on your prompt question. Second, learners pair up with someone sitting next to them. Finally, you select a few random pairs to summarize their ideas for the class.

Using "Think-Pair-Share" at the beginning of your presentation allows listeners to recall prior knowledge, organize it, and relate it to what you are going to cover. Using this technique in the middle of your presentation allows you to break up your lecture into more active segments. Finally, you can use this technique at the end of your presentation to encourage learners to review and recall the content, to integrate the new information into what they already know, to reflect on meaning, and to apply the learning in novel ways.

Review Prompt

Stopping briefly to simply ask, *"What do you think is the most important idea we've discussed so far?"* can be an easy and quick way to break up your lecture with something active. This gives the listener a chance to stop and reflect on what has been said. A "Review Prompt" can be an easy technique to insert any time you sense your audience is losing interest.

Student Summary and Evaluation

Ask another learner to summarize what the previous person just said. Use additional prompt questions to delve more into evaluation. Questions such as, "*Do you agree with what Student A said? Why or why not?"* encourages the learner to use critical thinking skills. This technique engages more people in the discussion, gives reinforcement of ideas, and encourages active listening skills.

Affective Response

Ask learners to reflect on how something makes them *feel*. This technique is great for controversial subjects, but it can also be effective when discussing topics that require subjective judgment, like responding to a work of art. Since there are no "right" or "wrong" answers, "Affective Response" allows students to explore their own beliefs, and encourages a diversity of opinion. Perhaps even more importantly, using "Affective Response" can be a good reminder not to impose your beliefs and values on listeners.

Minute Paper

This technique involves stopping to ask students to write for a short period of time on a focused prompt question. This technique can be used at any point during your presentation, but it can be particularly useful towards the end as a way of encouraging learners to summarize what they have learned, organize new information, incorporate new ideas into their knowledge base, or apply the learning in novel ways.

More Techniques

Games

You may think that your audience is too old for games, but there is no better tool for turning material into high energy fun. A game brings out the competitive nature in the learners. Simply breaking the group into teams and having them compete against each other for some small prize adds a sense of urgency that can rarely be achieved any other way. Many games lend themselves to the classroom environment, particularly those games that are based on answering "trivia" questions.

Brainstorm

Similar to "Focused Listing," "Brainstorming" is better done in small groups. Encourage learners to start with the most obvious ideas and then move to ideas that are more extreme. Brainstorming is a good technique to begin a lecture to prepare listeners for what you are going to cover. It can also be a good technique to use at the end of your presentation to help learners make connections between what they have just learned and other knowledge.

Questions

Many lecturers plan to ask for questions; however, they get so focused that they forget to stop. Placing a slide into your presentation with a prompt question on it allows you to weave questions in. Just placing "Questions?" on the slide can be a helpful reminder.

Blank Page

One way to get your audience's full attention is to place a completely blank slide into your presentation. Immediately, listeners will be alert. Did the machine break? What will the presenter do? What is going to happen now? Now that you have your audience's full attention, you can ask for questions, ask a prompt question, or use another of the techniques discussed to keep the energy up in your audience.

Note Check

The "Note Check" is a technique where the lecturer asks listeners to share notes with a partner to compare and contrast what each has written. This is a good opportunity for learners to identify or clarify any points which may be confusing.

Question and Answer Pairs

In this technique you ask learners to write a question based on the content you have covered. Then, the goal is to have them "stump their partner" with the questions. You can then select a sampling of the best questions to pose to the entire group.

Hypothesis

One method for engaging students in critical thinking is to ask them to formulate a hypothesis about the content you are presenting. This encourages students to think more deeply about the content. Additionally, asking for a hypothesis about what might happen next creates anticipation for the content coming up.

Concept Maps

Learners in small groups fill in a visual representation of a concept. Two examples included here are, cause and effect, and compare and contrast.

Last Question

Many lecturers end with the standard, *"Any questions?"* Often, listeners don't respond, even when you sense they might have questions. Instead, ask, "*If you could ask just one last question, what would it be?"* This allows learners to think deeply about the material before they leave. Because everyone is expected to come up with a question, this "Last Question" technique also takes the away the fear some listeners might have about looking foolish in front of their peers.

Resources

Active and Cooperative Learning. A useful set of links and an interesting array of publications.
http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/Cooperative_Learning.html

Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University.
https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/active-learning

Jhpiego. Useful resources including medical case studies.
http://reprolineplus.org/resources/trainer-educator

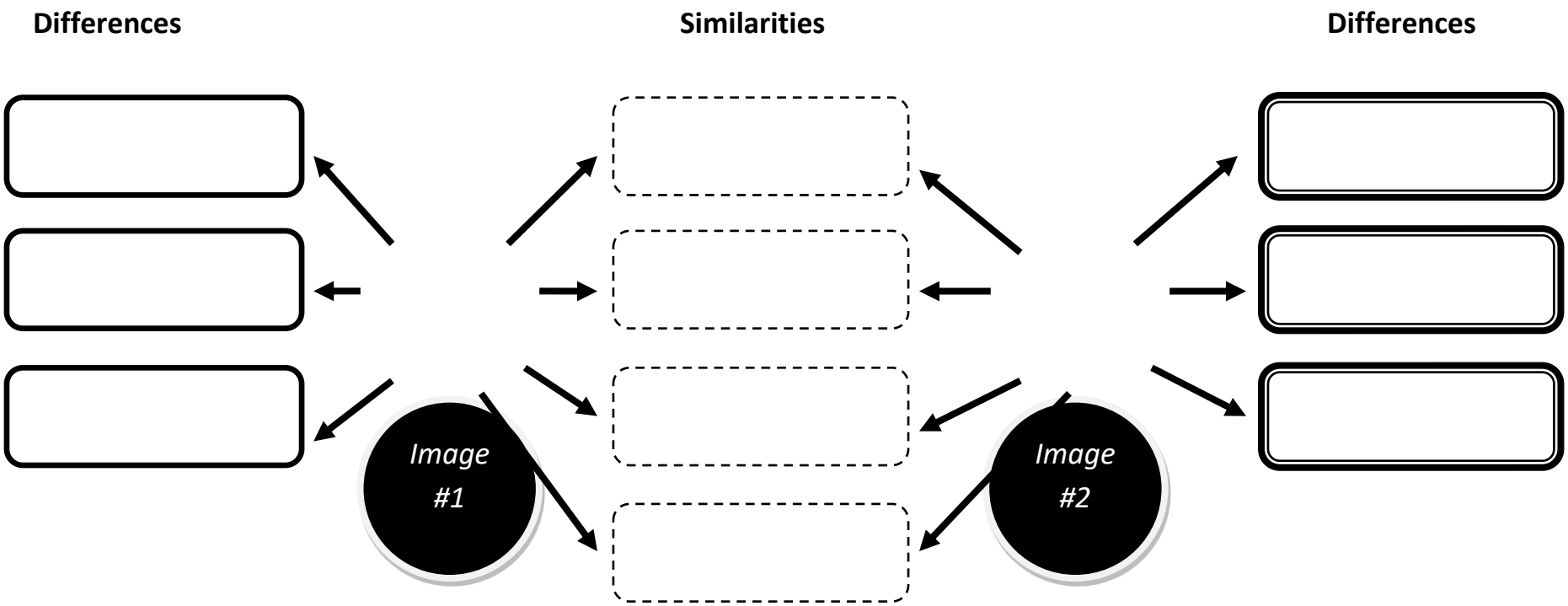
Learner-Centered Teaching – Focused on college level education.
https://www.engr.ncsu.edu/stem-resources/legacy-articles/learner-centered/#videos-and-publications-on-active-learning

Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan.
http://www.crlt.umich.edu/resources/teaching-strategies

Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of Maryland.
https://www.cte.umd.edu/active-and-collaborative-learning

Stanford University Teaching Commons.
https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/resources/teaching-resources

Concept Map - Compare and Contrast



Concept Map - Cause and Effect