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Characteristics of Good Learning Experiences

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Many of the characteristics of good learning experiences mentioned by the group during the May 13 seminar are in fact related to instructional techniques that have substantial research support behind them. This handout provides a list of these instructional techniques along with resources for people who would like to learn more about them. The characteristics identified as "Best in Show" during the session are listed under the relevant technique.

NOTE: Links may change over time; if you click a link and it does not work, you may be able to find the resource by going to the site's main page and searching for it.

1. Problem Based Learning Resource: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning (IJPBL)
    a. Learning activities include applied portions/projects that are directly applicable to later life/work.
    b. The learning activities include applied learning and problem solving.
    c. The teacher uses an apprentice/mentor model: the teacher provides the tools / framework and presents students with a problem, then provides guidance as needed while they work through it.

2. Collaborative Learning Resource
    i. The activities include interactive, small group learning experiences.
    ii. The teacher fosters a shared sense of responsibility amongst the learners; the group gains strength through working together to learn.

3. Small Group Discussion Resource
    a. Learning activities include small group discussion, which encourages critical thinking and allows interaction with peers who may have relevant knowledge or expertise.

4. Interdisciplinary Learning Resource
    a. The learning activity mixes disciplines and allows students to apply one to the other (e.g., teaching Freud alongside Shakespeare).

5. Class Structure Resources

    a. This resource provides good structure and guidance.

6. Reflective Teaching Strategies Resource

    a. Thinking about how to teach (e.g., watching yourself teach on video, practicing an activity before trying it in the classroom, gathering relevant real world stories to use) can help you provide more effective learning experiences for your students.

There are also teaching resources available to you at the Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs site.