

Group 1 - Listening Teams

Overview

This activity is a way to help students stay focused and alert during a lecture-based lesson. Listening teams create small groups responsible for clarifying the class material.

Procedure

1. Divide the students into four teams, and give the teams these assignments:

Team	Role	Assignment
1	Questioners	After the lecture based lesson, ask at least two questions about the material covered.
2	Agreers	After the lecture based lesson, tell which points they agreed with (or found helpful) and explain why.
3	Nay-sayers	After the lecture based lesson, comment on which points they disagreed with (or found unhelpful) and explain why.
4	Example givers	After the lecture based lesson, give specific examples or applications of the material.

2. Present your lecture based lesson. After it is over, give teams a few moments to complete their assignments.
3. Call on each team to question, to agree, and so forth. You should obtain more student participation than you ever imagined.

Variations

1. Create other roles. For example, ask a team to summarize the lecture based lesson or ask a team to create questions that test students' understanding of the material.
2. Give out questions in advance that will be answered in the lecture based lesson. Challenge students to listen for the answers. The team that can answer the most questions wins.

Group 2 - Synergetic Teaching

Overview

This method is a real change of pace. It allows students who have had different experiences learning the same material to compare notes.

Procedure

1. Divide the class in half.
2. Send one group to another room to read about the topic you are teaching. Make sure the reading material is well formatted and easy to read.
3. During this time, give an oral, lecture based lesson on the same material to the other half of the class.
4. Next, reverse learning experiences. Provide reading material on your topic for the group that has heard the lecture based lesson and provide a lecture based lesson for the reading group
5. Pair up members for each group and have them recap what they have learned.

Variations

1. Ask half of the students to listen to a lecture based lesson presentation with their eyes closed while the other half views visual information such as overhead transparencies accompanying the lecture based lesson with their ears covered. After the lecture based lesson is completed, ask the two groups to compare notes about what they have heard or seen.
2. Give one half of the class concrete examples of a concept or theory you want them to learn. Do not tell them about the concept or theory they illustrate. Present to the other half of the class the concept or theory without the examples. Pair up students from both groups and have them review the lesson together.

Group 3 - Point Counter-Point

Overview

This activity is an excellent technique for stimulating discussion and gaining a deeper understanding of complex issues. The format is similar to a debate but less formal and moves more quickly.

Procedure

1. Select an issue that has two or more sides.
2. Divide the class into groups according to the number of positions you have stated, and ask each group to come up with arguments to support its side. Encourage them to work with seat partners or small cluster groups.
3. Reconvene the entire class, but ask members of each group to sit together with space between the subgroups.
4. Explain that any student can begin the debate. After that student has had an opportunity to present *one* argument in favour of his or her assigned position, allow a different argument or counterargument from other groups.
5. Conclude the activity by comparing the issues as you, the teacher, see them. Allow for follow-up reaction and discussion.

Variations

1. Instead of a group on group debate, pair up individual students from different groups and have them argue with each other. This can be done simultaneously, so that every student is engaged in the debate at the same time.
2. Line up the opposing groups so that they are facing each other. As one person concludes his or her argument, have that student toss an object (such as a ball or a bean bag) to a member of the opposing side. The person who catches the object must rebut the previous person's argument.

Group 4 - Role Reversal Questions

Overview

Even if you ask students to think of questions during the heart of a lesson, not just at the end, you may get a lukewarm response when you ask "Are there any questions?" With this technique, you reverse roles: you ask question and the students try to respond.

Procedure

1. Compose question you would raise about some learning material if you were a student. Create questions that :
 - a. Seek to clarify difficult or complex material (e.g., "Would you explain again the way to _____?")
 - b. Compare the material to other information (e.g., "How is this different than _____?")
 - c. Challenge your own points of view (e.g. "Why is it necessary to do this? Wouldn't it lead to a lot of confusion?")
 - d. Request examples of the ideas being discussed (e.g. "Could you give me an example of _____?")
 - e. Test the applicability of the material (e.g., "How could I use this idea in real life?")
2. At the beginning of a question period, announce to the students that you are going to "be" them, and they collectively are going to "be" you. Proceed to ask your questions.
3. Be argumentative, humorous, or whatever else it takes to get them to jump into the fray and bombard you with answers.
4. Reversing roles a few times will keep your students on their toes and prompt them to ask question on their own.

Variations

1. Instead of using this technique at the start of a question and answer session, revert to it when students have become complacent about questions.
2. Turn the event into a "media conference". You become the media, introducing your self as "Chris from CNN" or the like, and press the class with questions that probe, attack, or mock the learning material in question.