

Teaching Tips

A Forum for discussion and tips for advancing teaching and learning at Mona

Instructional Development
Unit UWI, Mona



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Facilitating Engaged Learning in the Interaction Age

The Instructional Development Unit (IDU) welcomes all faculty and especially new members of faculty to the 2009-2010 academic year. We hope this will be an exciting year of teaching and learning for you. The IDU stands ready to assist you in advancing teaching and learning through innovative teaching strategies.

Special points of interest:

- The Teaching Tips Newsletter is a publication of the Instructional Development Unit (IDU) at the UWI, Mona.
- The Newsletter is published six times for the academic year and provides tips for improving teaching and learning in higher education. It is available online (<http://myspot.mona.uwi.edu/idu/>) as well as in the office of the IDU.
- If you have an area that you would like to explore using this medium, do not hesitate to contact us at the IDU.

The personally felt pain of teaching badly makes the joy of teaching well worth the effort. - Anonymous

In a relatively short time learning has evolved from textbooks to televisions to computers and now there is much interest in mobile digital devices. These developments have occurred against the backdrop of society's evolution from an *Industrial Age* to an *Information Age* to an *Interaction Age*. This *Interaction Age* is a period in which information is now being understood as something that creates multiple opportunities for interaction. People interact with information and people interact around information.

Colleges and universities are now called to provide learning technologies that support and encourage interaction. In this regard, interaction can be human-to-human and human-to-information. In applying this concept of interactivity to the learning environment at UWI, all facilitators of learning must be proactive in designing learning environments that are rich in interaction. These interactions can be facilitated by the use of new and emerging technologies or by traditional peer to peer, active and interactive teaching and learning strategies.

Why not challenge yourself to create more learning and teaching opportunities this semester for interaction both in the face-to-face classroom and online? Here are some suggestions for human-to-human interaction in the face-to-face classroom:

Principle

Teaching Strategy



How can I engage learners with abstract content? Higher levels of learning involve active and purposeful engagement with complex abstracted phenomena.

How can I get learners to engage multiple perspectives? Higher levels of learning include diverse and/or multiple perspectives about the issue(s) or problem(s) presented.

How can I demonstrate the relevance of the concepts I am teaching to learners?

Higher levels of learning require that learners are aware of how relevant the knowledge is to their lives and to society.

Case Study
Role Play
Concept Webbing
Semantic Webbing

Debates
Guided hypertext with annotations
Multiple information sources
Sequenced content databases

Press conferences
Debate with invited experts

Online case histories with raw data



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Principle

How can I respond to the multiple ways of knowing/learning in my class?

How can I cause learners to assume greater levels of responsibility for their learning in my classroom?

How can I advance the process of meaning making in my classroom?
Higher levels of learning require learners to build meaning into the issues and problems presented.

How can I get learners to engage in critical thinking and honour alternative perspectives?
Higher levels of learning require that learners come to realise that their own world view is not the only one or necessarily the correct one.

Teaching Strategy

Open ended questioning
Web quest
Problem based learning/case study

Group cooperative projects
Peer Presentations
Self assessment rubrics

Antithetical questions
Scaffold discussion
Reflective question posing

Role reversal questions
Brainstorming
Heterogeneous groupings



Promoting interactivity through new and emerging learning technologies.

New and emerging digital learning technologies provide faculty in higher education with numerous opportunities for facilitating interactivity in their classes. Students are recipients of content created by an authoritative source and they also become co-creators and prosumers (producers and consumers) of available content. In the *Interaction Age*, there is a shift in focus from information to interaction. Learning is focused on social interaction and the collaborative creation of knowledge through social negotiation. A number of emerging technologies can be used by higher education faculty to support interactive learning.

- A group of technologies collectively referred to as Web 2.0 including blogs, wikis and social networking tools, provide faculty with access to a wide array of learning technologies that can be used to support social interaction both within and outside the classroom. Rather than simply transmitting information to the learners, higher education faculty can harness the powers of Web 2.0 tools including blogs, wikis and social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook in classroom activities that support social interaction among the students.
- Mobile learning (m-learning) is also another way of facilitating interaction in the higher education classroom. Portable devices such as smart phones, MP3/4 players, laptops and Tablet PCs allow learners to share information and become actively engaged in the learning process.
- Free 3-Dimensional (3-D) web-based virtual worlds such as Second Life provide learners with opportunities to be actively engaged in the simulated environment as they collaboratively solve problems, experiment and engage in gaming activities designed to support meaningful learning. Through Second Life, learners can connect, share and socialize with each other and thereby facilitate interactive learning.

Learning in the *Interaction Age* means that learners are always actively engaged in the instructional process. Lecturers in higher education must therefore utilize available learning technologies to create instructional environments that support meaningful engagement through facilitating peer to peer interaction, student to faculty interaction and interaction with content.

Are you a knowledgeable web user? Test yourself...Choose the correct response.

1. What is the definition for the word **AVATAR**?
A). A character that represents an online user.
B). A character that identifies an online user.
C). A representation of a cartoon personality.
2. What is the definition for the word **BOT**?
A). This is an automated software programme that can be used to identify spam email.
B). This is an automated software programme that can execute certain commands when it receives a specific input (like a ro-"bot").
C). This is a software programme that is used to back up a corrupted file.
3. What is the definition for the word **STREAMING**?
A). This is the uploading of a video file that can be uploaded to a computer and sent to multiple users.
B). This is the playing back of a multimedia file without it being completely downloaded first.
C). This is the uploading of an audio file which can be distributed to several persons.

Answers from techterms.com 1 A, 2 B, 3B

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