What’s New is Old Again...or Think-Pair-Share Revisited

Looking for ways to get students engaged and critically think about the content you’re teaching? Ever heard of Think-Pair-Share? Some of you are thinking... oh, not that again! You may have tried it and it didn’t work. Well in defense of a great pedagogical tool... Here is an example of this approach used in a LARGE freshman history class of over 100 students! Yes, freshman!

The instructor of a 50-minute history course in a large stadium like auditorium used this approach. With such a large class the instructor wanted to ensure that each and every person was involved. It is very easy for an instructor with a large class in an auditorium to say, “Active group learning is impossible to achieve in this kind of environment”. That was not the case in this class!

The instructor provided the students with thought-provoking questions not just about specific facts within the content but with ways to extend the ideas and themes that ensure a variety of perspectives are discussed. She asked the students to think about the question and discuss their thoughts and perspectives with a neighbor. When one group of students was asked to share their thoughts, other groups were whispering to each other agreeing and disagreeing with what the group said. This is a wonderful example of how this simple pedagogical tool encourages engagement of the course topic.

Is this what you’d like to achieve in your class? To learn more, view an excellent infographic from The Cult of Pedagogy or read tips on using this active learning technique at Education Week.

Need assistance with activities in large classes? Contact us for a one-on-one consultation!

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