

Classroom-Based Exercises

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Woodberry, RD. Aldrich, HE. Planning and Running Effective Classroom-Based Exercises. *Teaching Sociology*, V28, No. 3 (Jul 2000), pp 241-248.

The Big Three

- Three main points:
 - Plan and communicate plan
 - Execute
 - Evaluate
- Motivation¹
 - Critical Thinking & Independence
 - Teamwork & Communication Skills
 - Long-term memory of class-room concepts

Planning (1)

- Do it
- Organize it
 - Time entire exercise
 - Break exercise into and include
 - Segments (priority, focus, time)
 - Transitions
 - Backup plans
 - **Recap/Debriefing (critical thinking)²**
 - Strategic placement of exercise in a given lesson

Planning (2)

- Maximizing Energy³
 - The motivating “hook” (i.e. big picture)
 - Maximize involvement (small groups, forced reporting)
 - Concrete written tasks (data table, homework)
 - Collection of tasks⁴
 - Student feeling of accomplishment
 - Student accountability
 - Instructor connection (do check work)

Planning (3)

- Written Instructions⁵
 - Prepare detailed written instructions
 - “discuss” vs yes or no or data tables
 - Avoid petty details (prioritize segments)
 - Use visual organization (tables, graphs, pics)
- Organize group (leader, secretary, etc.)⁶

Execute Exercise (1)

- Written instructions (not spoken)
- Monitor exercise
 - Notice and help student confusion
 - Note important student observations
 - Monitor Time
 - Deadline notification (provides motivation)
 - Time adjustments
 - End when everyone has “grappled” (70%)⁷

Execute Exercise (2)

- Debrief
 - Major goals (coursework)
 - Differing viewpoints (critical thinking)
 - Note-taking
 - Receive and *appraise* insight from students
 - Reporting
 - Use exact words of students
 - Relate students contributions to course framework

Evaluation

- Periodic distribution of notecards to students
- After each exercise/segment, self-evaluate
 - What worked well or didn't, why?
 - What students know or don't.

Conclusions

- Big three
 - Develop written, explicit plan, and clearly communicate it
 - Execute and debriefing for:
 - Importance of student's work
 - Breed student long-term memory of lessons
 - Model critical thinking
 - Get feedback
- Increase understanding, critical thinking, preparation

Citations

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Citations Ct'd

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- e. Felder, RM. Brent, R. 1994. Cooperative Learning in Technical Courses: Procedures, Pitfall Payoffs. ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 377038. Retrieved April 10, 2000
(<http://www2.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/Papers/Coopreport.html>)
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2. Debriefing citations:

- a. Billson, JM. 1986. The College Classroom as a Small Group: Some Implications for Teaching and Learning. *Teaching Sociology*. 14:143-51.
- b. Millis, B. 1992. How Cooperative Learning Can Fulfill the Promise of the Seven Principles. *Cooperative Learning and College Teaching* 2:5-6.

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- c. Panitz, T. 1997. Faculty and Student Resistance to Cooperative Learning. *Cooperative Learning and College Teaching* 7:2-4.
 - d. Cross & Steadman (see above)
3. Support for heightening energy
- a. Billson (see above)
 - b. Cross & Steadman (see above)
4. Support for Student Feedback:
- a. Cross & Steadman (see above)

Citations Ct'd

5. Preparing student instructions
 - a. Cooper (see above)
 - b. Downs-Lombardi, J. 1996. Ten Teaching Tips for Newcomers. *College Teaching* 44:62-4.
 - c. Prescott, Susan. 1994. Trouble-Shooting. *Cooperative Learning and College Teaching* 3:6-7.
 - d. Prescott, Susan. 1996. Trouble-Shooting. *Cooperative Learning and College Teaching* 7:5-6.
6. Organizing groups
 - a. Cooper (see above)

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- b. Prescott, S. 1992. More Tips for Getting Started with CL. *Cooperative Learning and College Teaching* 7:2-4.
 - c. Johnston, S. 1997. Dangerous Assumptions. *Cooperative Learning and College Teaching* 7:8-11.
 - d. Billson (see above)
7. About “grappling” material sufficiently
- a. Cuseo, JB. 1997. Guidelines for Group Work. *Cooperative Learning and College Teaching* 7:11-16.
8. Feedback suggestions
- a. Lowman, J. 1995. *Mastering the Techniques of Teaching*. 2nd Ed. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

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b. Cross & Steadman (see above).

9. Websites

a. http://www.unc.edu/~healdric/soci380/active_learn.html (student comments on exercises)