Chapter 10
Active Teaching Phases: Foundational Pedagogies

In Chapters 7, 8 and 9 we discussed the process of preparing to teach by looking at the preactive phases of teaching that included: needs assessment, objective writing and development, lesson planning, and both formative and summative evaluation processes. In the next two chapters, we will be looking at the dynamics of teaching in the four different types of courses. The process of teaching in the online versus the traditional will be discussed along with the pedagogical opportunities of teaching online in foundational courses, skills based courses, analysis/synthesis courses and hybrid courses.

While understanding the dynamics of teaching in a traditional face to face course, many instructors have a difficult time understanding the differing roles in teaching an online course or training session. The role of the instructor in the traditional setting is to prepare a lesson and deliver the education or training to a group of individuals through lectures and in class activities, then assigning out of class work to be collected in some manner and graded. Much of the focus is on the instructor. As Pallof and Pratt (2002) argue, in order for a high degree of interactivity to occur in an online course, the roles of faculty and students need to change. Instructors need to be willing to give up what is repeated throughout the literature, as the “sage on the stage” mentality of being in total control, and allowing students to take an andragogical level of responsibility in offering learning activities. For some faculty and students, this initially offers an uncomfortable sense of role paradigm as teachers are used to teaching and students have a sense of instructor control in learning. In the online course the dynamics are different but provide a powerful technological platform for teaching and learning. A meta-analysis study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education found that, on average, students in online learning conditions performed better than those receiving face-to-face instruction (2009). This may be due to the nature of online learning that includes additional learning time and materials as well as additional opportunities for collaboration that produce the increased learning advantages. The study also noted that online learning is much more conducive to the expansion of learning time than is face-to-face instruction.

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Feenberg (1999) claims that “technology is not a predefined thing at all, but an environment, an empty space faculty must inhabit and enliven.” This establishes the stage that teachers can use the same creative energies that is expected to engage a face-to-face classroom to enhance the online classroom. The question is how to make the transition from the traditional face to face to the online. Feenberg emphasizes the importance of this shift in mindset about how technology plays a role in education with the need for an attitudinal shift:

- Move from the belief that face-to-face is best to the belief that various environments support high quality learning
- Move from being “people oriented is in-compatible with technology” to “distance education is people oriented.”
- Move from “blaming technology when learning process breaks down” to “when learning process breaks down, evaluate teaching strategies.”

To accomplish this, institutions need to make an investment in properly training and educating faculty and trainers as to the opportunities for deep learning that the online arena has for teaching and learning. Speck (2000) alludes to the need to link research in the efficacy of learning in online classrooms to the training of online instructors. Institutions need to invest in instructor professional development in not only the use of online platforms but how to prepare and teach online and the myriad of technology based pedagogies. It also means learning how to fuse the online platforms, producing engaging and active online learning materials such as: streaming videos and audio, developing learning tutorials, how to conduct synchronous and asynchronous communications and the proper ways to maximize the learning opportunities that exist.

**PEDAGOGIES IN FOUNDATIONAL COURSES**

In designing and teaching foundational courses, courses targeted to provide a solid learning foundation of the core information and concepts of a particular discipline, online learners must be engaged learners and not just passive recipients of foundational concepts. The online instructor must utilize the best methods to assure that the learners in the online course are active learners. Active learning, be it in the form of constructivism, progressive education, or behaviorism, can involve the multiplicity of interactive distance learning suggested to provide the opportunity for the student to interact with the teacher as soon as he/she finds the need for this interaction (Notar, et al., 2002). Students generally don’t learn through just the posting of PowerPoint presentations or volumes of text to read or through just writing papers or answering text base questions from the readings. Participants learn through active involvement with the material. There are many opportunities to engage learners in the course and training materials beyond the posting of text to read.

To create a more active and engaged online learning environment is the key to online student success. Klemm (1998) described eight ways to enhance student engagement:

1. Require participation – consistency in participation will keep students on track in the course content
2. Form learning teams – cooperation and interaction among students will encourage further engagement and teamwork, often inflicting a feeling of responsibility to others
3. Make activity interesting – most importantly, keep activities active and appealing to multiple learning styles; reading is likely not the best way that all students learn.
4. Don’t settle for opinions – opinions are okay to include, but do not let students rely
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