



# White Board

Become An Effective Teacher & Save Your Valuable Teaching Time and Energy

Center for Effective Undergraduate Teaching (864) 388-8426

## Three Active Learning Strategies You Can Do in 10 Minutes or Less

A 2015 SURVEY of Faculty Focus readers found that the number one barrier preventing faculty from implementing the flipped classroom model and other active learning experiences into their courses is TIME. Faculty reported they don't have time to plan extra learner-centered activities, due to increasing responsibilities, and they don't have time to implement the activities in class because there's too much content to cover.

If you feel this way, you're not alone. But, you can still create engaging learning experiences for students. And you can do it in 10 minutes (or less).

### Why 10 Minutes (or Less)?

In my work, the FLIP is when you "Focus on your Learners by Involving them in the Process." It's when you "flip" it to your students and involve them in the process of reviewing, connecting, analyzing and creating. But you don't need to redesign your whole course around the flipped model. I always encourage faculty to first look for flippable moments and then add an active learning strategy to those moments.

Other scholars are also sharing the power of using brief active learning strategies to re-engage students and improve learning. In his book, *Small Teaching*, Lang (2016) explains how brief activities "have the power to produce as much or more learning than your anxiously overprepared lecture" (p. 8). We know from educational research and from our own teaching experience that students' attention, focus, and energy decrease as they listen to a straight lecture. "The longer students sit passively in a class, the more attention drifts from the presentation and the longer the drifts last. If you go more than 15 minutes without an activity, you may have lost more than half of your students" (Felder & Brent, p. 128, 2016).

You may decide to add an activity to the beginning of class to help students review course material or connect their pre-class

work to the in-class work. Or, you may pause your lecture at the mid-way point to help students re-focus or review main ideas. Or, you may want to stop lecturing a few minutes before class ends to assess learning or clarify confusion. But, keep it brief. "If you give students too long to solve a problem, you can waste time. Some students finish a task quickly. Others struggle the whole time which increases their frustration. If you keep the activities short and focused – anywhere between five seconds and three minutes – you avoid both problems" (Felder & Brent, p. 124, 2016).

When you deliver a lecture, you are presenting information you know inside and out. But it's all new to your students. They are trying to keep up with the flow of information and make sense of it. They may listen attentively and take notes, but at some point they will encounter information that is completely new to them and this may impact their ability to stay focused. Felder & Brent (2016) explain, "When people's cognitive load at a given time exceeds the processing capacity of their working memory, their brain is in a state of cognitive overload, and they will be unable to process new information" (p. 93). Felder & Brent continue, "To keep students from being plunged into cognitive overload by a non-stop flow of information, occasionally turn off the flow" (p. 94).

You can "turn off the flow" by pausing during a lecture and giving students something to DO with the course material. Here are three strategies to try:

### Three Strategies You Can Do in 10 Minutes (or Less)

#### What's Missing?

Show students a list, diagram, picture, or series of steps related to the course content, but omit a piece of information. Challenge students to guess "What's Missing?" from the list or image. Examples: list of steps to solve a problem, list of characters in a story, list of sections in a research paper, and

a picture of equipment to be used in a lab experiment.

#### "Ah-Ha!" Wall

As students watch a video, participate in a lecture, or read an article, encourage them to pay attention to "ah ha" moments. An "ah ha" moment is when they notice the content is connected to another idea from the course, something they've experienced, or something related to a current issue. Ask them to post their "ah ha" idea on the class "wall." Use Padlet or Note.ly to create a free virtual wall where your students can post digital sticky notes, pictures, videos, or quotes. Review the wall in class and integrate their ideas into the lecture or choose posts from the wall to start a class discussion.

#### Brainstorming Challenge

If you want students to brainstorm a list of ideas or possible solutions, challenge them to generate more ideas by giving them two

see 10 Minutes, Page 2

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# Teaching and Evaluating Professionalism

THE EVIDENCE is growing. Employers prefer to hire employees/graduates who consistently demonstrate professionalism and emotional intelligence skills in the workplace. Cognitive and technical skills are essential as well, but these are largely expected now.

Why is professionalism so important? One reason is that, in the eyes of the consumer, employee actions and behaviors reflect on the organization. Patient satisfaction may increasingly be tied in with insurance reimbursement for services rendered. In the same way, students are ambassadors of the programs and institutions they represent when they train in hospitals or clinics, as well as when they secure employment after they graduate.

Therefore, employers and educational facilities have a vested interest in the professionalism skills that students demonstrate, or fail to demonstrate, during training and/or employment. Another reason professionalism is important is that it is a factor in graduate success. If one of your program's top priorities is to set your students up for success in this increasingly competitive job market, then teaching and/or evaluating professionalism must be a top priority as well.

Educators are left with three options when students come to our institutions and programs: 1) students come to us with these professionalism skills already learned and developed; 2) students will learn and develop these skills somewhere, somehow while they are in our programs, or 3) we will teach and evaluate professionalism both on campus and in the clinical environment.

The first step in teaching and evaluating professionalism is to work with advisory boards, clinical training sites, and

employers in your industry to identify what professionalism skills they desire or require in an employee. The second step is to effectively communicate to your students which skills or standards are expected of them as soon as they are accepted into your program. The earlier this communication takes place, the better.

These expectations should be addressed at the beginning of each course and reviewed often. In addition, faculty should effectively communicate how and when these skills will be evaluated for each student. The third step is to decide where to embed each professionalism skill within your curriculum. There may be some courses where multiple skills can be taught or discussed in one course, and there may be some courses where no skills will be taught in that particular course.

Teaching methods of professionalism may be formal or informal, and assignments may be done individually or assigned as team projects. At the completion of each assignment, group discussion is a valuable tool for sharing ideas and discussing conclusions.

The last step in addressing professionalism skills, and perhaps the most important one, is that professionalism skills need to be evaluated using a professional evaluation tool. This tool can be extremely valuable for the student and the evaluator. This tool should include each skill to be evaluated and the evaluation scale, or rubric, used to evaluate the student for that skill. Evaluations should be performed at regular intervals, such as the end of each term, and ideally, they should be done one-on-one.

For the evaluation to be most effective for the student, it should be performed over a 1–3-year period of time if possible. These

evaluations should identify the student's strengths as well as areas of focus for improvement. The more specific the evaluator can be on the professional evaluation, the more effective the professional evaluation as a tool can be for the student and the evaluator. If there are deficiencies in one or more categories or skills, faculty should clearly identify the deficiencies and determine a specific time frame for remediation of those deficiencies. The professional evaluation should be repeated at the end of that time frame. If there is improvement, the student's score(s) are changed for those skill levels. Consequences for failed remediation need to be clearly identified and communicated to the student at the beginning of each term, and these may include failure of the course and/or termination from the program.

The consequences of not addressing professionalism skills may include: reputation of the student/clinical site/school, compromised education (lack of adequately preparing the student to be successful), loss of credentials and/or licenses, potential legal action, and most importantly, potentially compromised patient care.

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*This article is featured in the Best of the Teaching Professor Conference, a collection of articles from some of the top-rated presenters and sessions at the 2017 conference.*

*Richard Hoylman; Teaching and Evaluating Professionalism; Faculty Focus; April 13, 2018; [ <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/teaching-and-evaluating-professionalism/> ] May 3, 2018.*

10 Minutes

Continued from Page 1

six-sided dice. Ask them to roll the two dice, add the total number together, and that's how many ideas they should add to their list. Example: If you roll a "4" and a "6" then you need to create a list of 10 ideas. Then, you can encourage them to analyze, sort, or prioritize their lists based on a set of criteria. The added pressure of time (10 minutes!) increases the challenge.

I hope these ideas inspire you to find 10 minutes in your next lesson to try an active learning strategy. If you're interested in five more strategies you can do in 10 minutes or less, download this bonus article.

## Resources:

Faculty Focus, Magna Publications (2015) *Flipped Classroom Trends: A Survey of College Faculty*. Available online: <https://www.facultyfocus.com/free-reports/flipped-classroom-trends-a-survey-of-college-faculty/>

Felder, R. & Brent, R. (2016). *Teaching and Learning in STEM: A Practical Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Honeycutt, B. (May 25, 2013). Looking for "Flippable Moments" in Your Class. Faculty Focus. Magna Publications. Available online: <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/blended-flipped-learning/looking-for-flippable-moments-in-your-class/>

Honeycutt, B. (no date). 3 Flipped Strategies You Can Do in 10 Minutes or Less. FLIP It Consulting.

Available online: <http://barbihoneycutt.com/3-flipped-strategies-can-10-minutes-less/>

Lang, J. (2016). *Small Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

*Barbi Honeycutt is a speaker, scholar, author, and founder of FLIP It Consulting in Raleigh, N.C. This article is based on her new online mini-course "10 Active Learning Strategies You Can Do in 10 Minutes or Less."*

*Barbi Honeycutt, PhD; Three Active Learning Strategies You Can Do in 10 Minutes or Less; Faculty Focus; April 23, 2018; [ <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/blended-flipped-learning/three-active-learning-strategies-you-can-do-in-10-minutes-or-less/> ] May 3, 2018*