

PAES Instructional Enhancement Initiative

College of Education, The Ohio State University

We're Famous!

Did you know that the PAES "Eggheads & Eggrolls" Discussion became well-known among NCATE reviewers? In fact, PAES was mentioned several times by reviewers as really paying attention to instructional enhancement. As for Eggheads, they brought up the legendary (okay, almost) PAES discussions as an example of instructional enhancement—in the words of one reviewer, it's a format and name that rather difficult to forget!

Autumn "Eggheads" Discussion: Making Time, Making Change!

The Autumn PAES Discussion "Eggheads & Eggrolls" is set for Monday, December 5th 12:00-1:30pm in room 269 Arps Hall.

A reminder about Eggheads (and for those who are new to PAES, an overview of the philosophy of these discussions):

The format was developed several years ago by PAES faculty who decided they wanted time to sit down and talk—not to have every meeting led by an

agenda of items that had to be done yesterday! So, Eggheads sets up a time, during exam week, to take a breather and talk with colleagues.

This quarter's discussion is from the book, *Making Time, Making Change* (All PAES faculty should have a copy—if you need a copy, see Darcy). We thought we would take some of the concrete ideas offered in the book and set up round tables around the implementation

of each idea. Would it/could it really work? How? Has anyone tried it? What might the effects of the change be on your work-life?

We will have discussion leaders at each table (volunteers, please!) and allow each person to rotate to several of the tables for discussions. Let's start implementing the change strategies, rather than just talking about them, and let's use "Eggheads" as the first step!

BOOK CLUB IS COMING...

Have an idea for a book? Do you want something concrete? Philosophical? Share your ideas with the I E I Committee before the end of autumn.

PAES Peer Review Document Shared with Academic Leaders

On October 19, the Draft of the PAES Peer Review of Instruction document was shared with the Deans and Academic Leaders as well as Dr. Martha Garland, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies.

Feedback was very positive.

Many in attendance were interested in the PAES Instructional Enhancement Initiative as well as the Peer Review Document, and at least one department has initiated follow-up discussions to determine feasibility of beginning a similar initiative.

Highlights of the Proposed PAES Peer Review of Instruction Document

The proposed Peer Review highlights a formative, self-reflective process that is intended to allow faculty at all ranks to participate and to gain from the experience. The document that outlines the proposed process contains 5 pages on philosophy, background, and expectations for the process. Here are the highlights:

Philosophy

In the first iteration of the document, adopted by the School in 2001, we agreed that: "Peer Review of Instruction in the School of PAES is a *critically reflective, collaborative, and continuous* activity focused on developing *instructional excellence* among our faculty. The goal of the PAES peer review of instruction process is to generate sustained reflection on one's own teaching and to promote dialogue among faculty concerning insights about teaching and the instructional processes." (Peer Review, 2001)

Principles

OSU has required that "Periodic peer review of teaching is required for both probationary and tenured faculty (at all ranks)...the faculty must determine the methods for peer review that work best for a particular department and apply them consistently...[and]... classroom observations should not serve as the sole method for peer assessment of teaching effectiveness" (OAA Handbook, Section IV)

Research Findings

Peer review should (a) be formative and summative; (b) include self-assessment that encourages self-reflection; (c) be part of an on-going process to improve instruction; (d) allow for different teaching styles that are appropriate and effective; (e) be rigorous and relevant; (f) be appropriate to the culture of the School; and (g) have as the ultimate goal, instructional enhancement. Thus, "closing the loop" is a critical concept of peer review—Faculty should use what they learn through multiple sources of feedback and demonstrate how this feedback impacts and improves instruction. (continued on p. 4)

Strategies Enhancing Instruction for Learning Disabled Students

By Roger Sasnett, M.A., NCSP *
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If you're the type that likes to "live on the edge," try throwing a pop quiz after wowing your students with a brilliant lecture on your favorite topic. Caution: you might not like the results. In the present author's opinion, students in college classrooms too often are passive participants in the learning process. For students with learning disabilities, a lecture-only format is particularly troublesome. This paper outlines eight strategies that instructors might consider as a means to boost learning outcomes for learning disabled students while enriching instruction for all class members.

Assisting LD Students Benefits All

Students with severe learning problems represent an unseen, yet prevalent element of the diverse student body at OSU. Sean Miller with the Office for Disability Services (ODS) reported that as of Winter Quarter 2005, there were 1,213 registered students at OSU who were also represented by ODS. Of those cases, approximately 72% were students whose disability compromised their ability to process information in the classroom (e.g., specific learning disability: 28%; attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder: 28%, psychiatric disability: 13%, etc.). Mr. Miller stated that he suspects there are far more students on campus who are yet undiagnosed, or that do not choose to utilize accommodations. Regarding the importance of responding to the needs of learning disabled students, Mr. Miller reminds teachers that providing classroom accommodations to individuals with disabilities is not merely doing what is right, but fulfilling a legal responsibility that is mandated by state and federal laws.

Importantly, curricular modifications and adjustments in pedagogy that are made for the purpose of enhancing learning for disabled students may result in serendipitous benefits for students without such differences. This effect is analogous to skateboarders and mothers with strollers enjoying the use of curb cuts in sidewalks, which were initially created for wheelchair access (Kinash, Crichton, & Kim-Rupnow, 2004).

8 Strategies for Improving Student Outcomes

Strategy 1: "Hold the Bus!"

Some professors might recognize themselves in the story of a bus driver who was chartered to pick up passengers from a hotel and deliver them to the airport to catch the next outgoing plane. Unable to wait for the tardy passengers, and with only 50-minutes remaining to get to the terminal, the driver slams closed the door, throws the bus in gear, and speeds off to the airport. The point here is that students may get left behind when instructors rush to complete the material outlined in the syllabus, or to finish the textbook. Consider cutting back on unnecessary material or superfluous reading so as to lighten the load for everyone. As an example, Reder and Anderson (1982) advanced the idea of assigning text summaries to students as reading material. In their study, students who read the text summary scored better on an achievement test than students who read the entire text (details were seen as distractions).

Strategy 2: Actively Involve Learners, While Checking Understanding

Studies have shown that students who take an active role in the learning process show higher rates of learning (Greenwood, Delaquadri, and Hall's study, as cited in Tincani, 2004). Consider using any of a myriad of techniques for getting students involved in classroom activities while checking their knowledge level, such as the following methods:

- Assign students in small groups to teach concepts to the other class members. According to Annis (1983), teaching in a peer tutoring model results in higher learning rates for the student teacher than for the learner.
- Assign students into learning groups to discuss a topic. Ask the groups to report to the class by writing their ideas on a sheet of poster paper with colorful marking pens. Hang the posters in a "gallery" and allow class members to view other groups' work
- Use "response cards" (Tincani, 2004). Response cards are pieces of paper or cards that students hold up to display answers to teacher questions or problems. For example, a teacher might state, "Please write on a response card the symbol used to show the

Strategies Enhancing Instruction for Learning Disabled Students

standard deviation for data from a sample. Show me now.” An alternate exercise is to provide prewritten answers on cards, requiring the students to select and show the card with the correct answer to your question.

- Instead of asking your students if they have questions, ask *them* the questions. Randomly call on individual students to share ideas, or examples from their experience.
- At the close of a section, ask students to write a brief summary of the main points. Select students to share their ideas. Recap, if necessary.

Strategy 3. Test Often

By testing frequently, instructors can help prevent students from procrastinating, keep course material from “stacking up,” thereby making studying more difficult, and improve the likelihood that students who experience anxiety in testing situations have multiple chances to succeed. An additional reason to test on a frequent basis is to enable class members to gain an understanding of what material to focus on in studying for tests. As well, attendance would likely improve when students are regularly held accountable for class material (Tincani, 2004).

Strategy 4. Develop a Universal Design for Instruction

The Universal Design for Instruction model (Scott, McGuire, and Embry, 2002) proactively focuses on pedagogically inclusive teaching and learning strategies, rather than on compliance and accommodations. The model’s nine strategies (available at www.facultyware.uconn.edu) “provide a framework to use when designing or revising instruction to be responsive to diverse student learners and to minimize the need for ‘special’ accommodations and retrofitted changes to the learning environment” (Scott, et al., p.1). For more information on Universal Design for Instruction, contact Dr. Margo Izzo, Project Director of the FAME Project at Izzo.1@osu.edu.

Strategy 5. Vary Your Mode of Delivery

Deliver content through multiple modes of delivery, such as electronic visual-aids, discussion, hands-on activities, and peer interaction. Ensure

that all learners are included and have full access to activities.

Strategy 6. Provide Alternative Methods for Students to Demonstrate Knowledge

Allow students to share their knowledge through different means. Examples include oral reports, demonstrations, portfolios, and three-dimensional constructions.

Strategy 7. Give and Provide Feedback

This point refers to you and the students. Regarding your students, seek ways to inform students of their progress. As well, ask students for their feedback of your teaching and the course prior to the end of the quarter, perhaps at a midpoint (Be prepared; this approach takes nerve).

Strategy 8: When in Doubt, Ask

Patty Carlton, director of the Office for Disability Services at OSU, suggests professors query students who appear to be struggling academically. “Sometimes students are the best experts available on how they learn,” Ms. Carlton explained. “Speaking to students directly about their learning problems helps instructors understand the students’ frustrations and struggles.”

Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to challenge teachers to go beyond lecturing students and to utilize pedagogical methods that will actively engage students in the learning process. The eight strategies outlined above represent a small fraction of the possible methods that might serve this goal. Hopefully, instructors will use some of these skills in their teaching in order to better serve learning disabled students, while enhancing the learning of all students in their charge.

* Note:

This is the first time that the PAES Instructional Enhancement Initiative Feature Article has been written by a student. Roger originally wrote his piece for the Diversity Column, but it was too good to cut down to the size needed for the column. So, we thought, why not make it the feature article? Maybe we should consider more student-authored publications for future editions... Any thoughts? Feedback? Anyone interested?

To become more involved in the initiative,
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PAES TEACHING INITIATIVE WEBSITE:
WWW.COE.OHIO-STATE.EDU/PAES
THEN, LOOK UNDER "INFORMATION FOR FACULTY"

Draft Peer Review of Instruction Document, Continued

Proposed Process

IF NOTHING ELSE, READ THIS!

Each year, probationary faculty choose 3 of the 14 options. These are submitted with the annual review as a plan for the coming year. In the following year, a short report on peer review of instruction is submitted. What is included in the report is not the actual findings from the peer review but, instead how the faculty member responded to the input and ideas uncovered through the peer review. Thus, the faculty member provides evidence that the reviews were completed and a narrative that provides evidence of changes/confirmation, etc. to teaching practices, course content, or other teaching-related endeavors.

Rationale

Faculty select options that will provide assistance they need with in their instruction. Faculty choose reviewers who are most likely to provide assistance with instruction,

not just those who will provide uniformly glowing letters for P&T. Because what is included in the response to the peer review process, not the results of the peer review process, there is no reason to select "safe" review options or reviewers.

Questions for faculty to consider:

Should peer classroom observation be required at all? The research (and OAA) does not support its use in isolation. Research questions its effect-

iveness, unless there is a trained review team who conducts several classroom visits each year, and at least two reviewers observe the same class. If classroom observation is retained, should a letter by the reviewer be sent to P&T?

So, we have lots to consider. This is an opportunity to have our Peer Review document reflect our values and our culture of teaching. I look forward to the discussion!

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"Remember the old days when we used
to eat his statistics homework?"