



How to Jump-Start Student Engagement in the Classroom from Day 1

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Session Abstract:

What do rocks, sand, two bottles of water, two blenders, fish in ponds and the corners of a room have in common with best practices in undergraduate education? This highly-interactive session will give you the answers--and more. You will leave with a handful of high-energy and practical strategies to use immediately in your classes. The presenter will demonstrate how to make your classroom a laboratory for innovation and engagement. Simple visuals to make points clear!

Research tells us best practices of classroom engagement include: respecting diverse talents and ways of knowing, encourages active learning, and develops collaboration amongst students (Chickering and Gamson, 1987). Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron (2003) tell us that effective teachers not only know their content, they also know how to deliver their content in an enthusiastic and challenging manner. In short, effective instructors know how to intentionally create a conducive climate to engage students (Cuseo; Tinto).

Detailed Summary:

All participants will receive a packet of information to help guide/complement their existing classroom efforts to engage students. Using simple visual and reflective activities (collaborative and individual), along with intentional questions and discussion, participants will address outcomes that include:

- Identifying the challenges of engaging students in a diverse classroom.
- Exploring specific activities that demonstrate how to introduce issues of leadership, critical thinking, priority management, and diversity in an engaging manner.
- Demonstration of activities that conference attendees can immediately utilize in their classrooms
- Participation through activities, pair/share, group discussion to elaborate on effectiveness of various types of activities used in the classroom to keep students engaged and focused
- Attendees sharing their own strategies used in the classroom that often take minimum time to prepare for, but reap the largest rewards for student involvement, interest and effectiveness

This interactive session will engage participants through the following:

- Introductions and Context
- Activity (Corners of a Room) and debrief on Diversity, Engagement, and Creativity
- Activity (Rocks, Sand, H2O) - and debrief on Time Management/Setting Priorities
- Activity (Fish in Ponds / Water Bottles) and debrief on Stress Management, Transition
 - from High School to College, Personal Growth
- Activity (Blenders) and debrief on Success Strategies
- Wrap Up/Conclusion and Call to Action

The objective of this session is to provide conference attendees with hands-on activities they can immediately implement in the classroom to engage students and keep them focused from day one of class. Also, to provide an opportunity for attendees to share their own strategies they have found useful in the classroom that often takes minimum time to prepare for but reap the largest rewards for student involvement, interest and effectiveness. The strategies introduced in this session have cross-discipline applicability and thus have relevance for a variety of instructors. These activities have been shown to and utilized by faculty, staff and administrative level personnel in a variety of training and meeting settings.

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