Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education

Facilitating Discussion

Challenges –Strategies – Expected Outcomes

Applying UDL Strategies to Achieve Outcomes

- Engagement – the why of learning
  - Recruit interest
  - Sustain effort & persistence
  - Self regulation
- Representation – the what of learning
  - Perception
  - Language & symbols
  - Comprehension
- Action & Expression – the how of learning
  - Physical action
  - Expression & communication
  - Executive functions

Objectives

- Identify strategies to facilitate discussions
- Discuss rubrics for assessment
- Describe qualities (examples) of effective discussions
- Define discussion participation

Purpose of Discussion

- Monitor student understanding
- Develop student understanding
- Promote social interaction
- Share knowledge and ideas
- Promote critical thinking

True Discussion

- Students feel free to present multiple points of view
- Students are open to changing their minds
- Students speak directly to one another
- Student responses are more than a single word or short phrase
  - Details
  - Rationale
  - Evidence

Challenge: Substantive Discussions

- What does a good discussion look like?

- Why discussions matter

- How to write

UDL Strategies: Substantive Discussions

- Engagement
  - Be aware of cultural norms
  - Set expectations
- Action/expression
  - Start with small group discussion
  - Vary approaches for sharing ideas
- Representation
  - Preview content
  - Allow time to prepare
  - Provide a discussion structure

Challenge: Engagement & Participation

- Limited response from students when asking for questions
- Small number of students consistently respond
- In class and online discussions very weak

Strategies: Engagement & Participation

- Engagement
  - Explain why discussion is beneficial for learning
  - Set clear expectations for participation, defining what good participation looks like
  - Ensure students are ready for the topic (content knowledge and notes)
  - Allow thinking time
- Action/Expression
  - Use a structure that supports equitable participation (eg. Rally Robin, Silent Discussion, Challenge Envelopes)
- Representation
  - Assign roles

Challenge: Designing Effective Questions

- Students don't understand the questions
- Get off track
- Responses are short, "I agree", "yes" …
- Bloom's Taxonomy of thinking skills

Strategies: Effective Questions

- Engagement
  - Practice discussion - teach students how to write a question
  - Have students write some questions

- Representation
  - Comprehension – clear question
  - "why is this important to … what is the meaning of"

- Action/Expression
  - Reflection - "after reading this how has your …. What would you do differently"

Challenge: How to Assess

- Graded or ungraded
- Ensuring participation without grading
- How to define a good post/response
- Track participation

Strategies: How to Assess

- Engagement
  - Student leaders/facilitators (assign/volunteer)
  - Students help create questions aligned w/outcomes
  - Remember there are many ways to be "present" and to "participate"
- Representation
  - Rubric development
  - Provide feedback on individual rubric score/met
- Action/Expression
  - Include options for audio/video
  - Peer assessment
  - Variety - Blogs/Journals/VoiceThread

Thank you

Stacy Duffield
Director
Office of Teaching and Learning
stacy.duffield@ndsu.edu

Sharley Kurtz
LAIC Assistant Manager, Instructional Designer
Learning & Applied Innovation Center
sharley.kurtz@ndsu.edu

Lori Swinney
Instructional Designer
Learning & Applied Innovation Center
Lori.swinney@ndsu.edu

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY