

Student Action: Groups

1. **Debate** – Students debate in pairs, but must defend the opposite side of their personal opinion. Variation: half the class take one position, half the other. They line up and face each other. Each student may only speak once, so that all students on both sides can engage the issue.
Online tool: Discussions; wiki
2. **Peer Review Writing Task** – To assist students with a writing assignments, encourage them to exchange drafts with a partner. The partner reads the essay and writes a three-paragraph response: the first paragraph outlines the strengths of the essay, the second paragraph discusses the essay's problems, and the third paragraph is a description of what the partner would focus on in revision, if it were his/her essay.
Online tool: Mail; discussions
3. **Psychoanalysis** – Students get into pairs and interview one another about a recent learning unit. The focus, however, is upon analysis of the material rather than rote memorization. Sample Interview Questions: Can you describe to me the topic that you would like to analyze today? What were your attitudes/beliefs before this topic? How did your attitudes/beliefs change after learning about this topic? How will/have your actions/decisions altered based on your learning of this topic? How have your perceptions of others/events changed?
Online tool: Mail; private discussion tool
4. **Lecture Reaction** – Divide the class into four groups after a lecture: questioners (must ask two questions related to the material), example givers (provide applications), divergent thinkers (must disagree with some points of the lecture), and agrees (explain which points they agreed with or found helpful). After discussion, brief the whole class.
Online tool: Mail; discussions
5. **Student Pictures** – Ask students to bring their own pictures from home to illustrate a specific concept to their working groups.
Online tool: eCommunity; discussions
6. **Definitions and Applications** – In groups, students provide definitions, associations, and applications of concepts discussed in lecture.
Online tool: Discussions; wiki
7. **Ranking Alternatives** – Teacher gives a situation, everyone thinks up as many alternative courses of action (or explanations of the situation) as possible. Compile list. In groups, now rank them by preference.
Online tool: Discussions; wiki
8. **Simulation** – Place the class into a long-term simulation (such as a business) to enable Problem-Based Learning (PBL).
Online tool: Virtual world (e.g. Second Life); wiki; discussions
9. **Group Instructional Feedback Technique** – Someone other than the teacher polls groups on what works, what doesn't, and how to fix it, then reports them to the teacher.
Online tool: Survey; mail

10. **Classroom Assessment Quality Circles** – A small group of students forms a “committee” on the quality of teaching and learning, which meets regularly and includes the instructor.
Online tool: Chat; discussion; blog

Creating Groups

11. **Sign up for groups** – Use Group Manager tool to create groups with sign-up sheets (listing different authors, skills, a specific kind of problem to solve, different values in group description) and let students self-select their working group
Online tool: Group Manager tool in Webcourses
12. **Choose groups** – Set up different topics of discussions and ask students to pick one, post their ideas in discussions and discuss opinions with others who also chose this topic.
Online tool: Discussions

Role-Play

13. **Role-Playing** – Assign roles for a concept, students research their parts and post their discussions.
Online tool: Wiki; discussions
14. **Jury Trial**. Divide the class into various roles (including witnesses, jury, judge, lawyers, defendant, prosecution, audience) to deliberate on a controversial subject.
Online tool: Blog; discussions; chat
15. **Press Conference (Guest Speaker)** – Invite a guest speaker and run the class like a press conference, with a few prepared remarks and then fielding questions from the audience.
Online tool: Discussions; chat
16. **Analytic Memo** – Write a one-page analysis of an issue, roleplaying as an employer or client.
Online tool: Assignment; wiki; discussions

References

- Illinois Online Network (ION). (2007). Instructional strategies for online courses. Retrieved September 21, 2007 from <http://www.ion.illinois.edu/resources/otai/>
- Yee, K. (2007). *Interactive Techniques*. Orlando, FL: Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, University of Central Florida.