Utilizing Active Learning

In the 60s, an educator named Edgar Dale theorized that if students are to retain information they must "do" as opposed to "hear", "read" or "observe." His research led to the development of the Cone of Experience (Learning). In today's world this "doing" is referred to as active learning.

Active learning teaching techniques are sensory based. The more sensory channels interact with a resource the more the student will learn. If given real-life educational experiences these sensory channels will develop and create lasting learning. Therefore, Dale felt that teachers should design course work around real life experiences.

This Cone can be used as a tool to allow instructors to make conscious decisions about how their course should be taught. To use this tool, the instructor can ask the following:

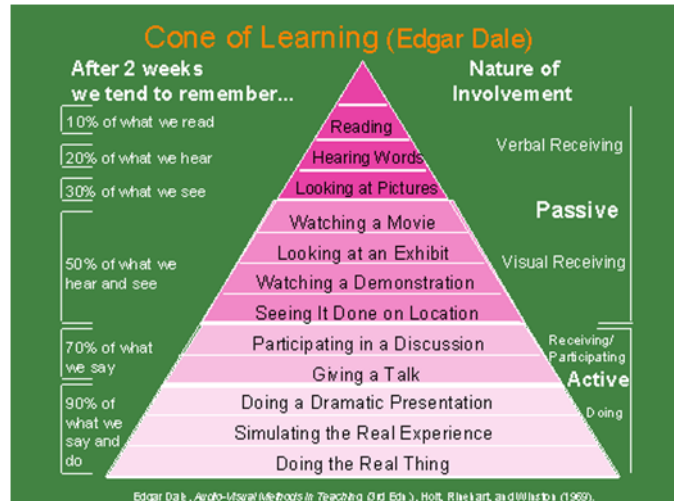
Cone of Learning (Edgar Dale)

- Where do the assignments and/or classroom experience fit on the cone? How far are these experiences removed from real-life?
- What kind of learning experience should be provided in the classroom? What kind of learning experience should be provided outside of the classroom?
- How many senses can students use to learn this instructional material? Am I reaching all different learning preferences? Am I reaching all of the different types of intelligence?
- Does the instructional material actually enhance student learning?

Employing active learning techniques in the classroom can create a rich learning environment where student learning is long-lasting and relevant.

New Student Evaluation Procedure Established

To address concerns from the Adjunct Faculty Needs Assessment, a new procedure for administering evaluations has been developed. The procedure is as follows:

- Standard evaluation forms will be used, which can be obtained from your faculty secretary, the Office of Adjunct Faculty Support Programs, or from REC - Macomb staff.

- Evaluations must be administered one month prior to the end of the semester; for Fall 2011 this date is November 23 and for Winter 2012 this date is April 4.

- Student anonymity must be preserved. Faculty members are required to leave the room while students complete the forms. On campus instructors should ask a reliable student to carry the evaluations to Wickes Hall 216 or to the book drop in the Regional Education Center. If you are an off-campus instructor, have the evaluations taken to the office at your off campus site.

- The forms will then be scanned and picked up by the respective Dean's offices for evaluation. The summary results of the evaluations along with any typed responses to the open-ended question will be returned to each adjunct faculty member one month after the end of the semester.

- It is the hope that this new standardized procedure will allow each and every adjunct faculty member to view their course evaluations, individually assess the results, and then adjust their coursework appropriately, if necessary.

What is General Education?

General Education (GenEd) at SVSU refers to, "*that part of a student's education that contributes to the breadth of knowledge needed to be a more effective citizen of a complex and culturally diverse world. It supports the student with the skills and perspectives that will not always be gained from a specialized program of study and provides a basis for a common educational experience all students and graduates of the University can share. It is intended to help each student become more broadly knowledgeable, adaptable, and capable in their many life roles.*"

The University's goal is for its GenEd program to enhance students' ability to think critically, reason logically, and communicate effectively. To reach this goal, the following list of knowledge domains is a part of the General Education curriculum:

- Appreciation of a wide range of perspectives and experiences
- Acquaintance with the many ways of experiencing and acquiring knowledge
- Broad knowledge about the human and natural world
- Understanding of the structure and order of the natural world, including human thought processes
- Appreciation of the arts for aesthetic value and for their usefulness in exploring complex human truths
- Knowledge of the history of civilizations
- Competence in communication
- Exploration and development of individual values and ethics

The General Education Program consists of 35 credit hours in 10 categories. There is a learning objective for each of the 10 categories. As well, within each category, there are a required number of credit hours required of each student, and a group of courses from which each student may choose. Those faculty who teach GenEd courses are required to assess student success based on the learning objective attached to their course. The purpose of this assessment is to see whether the learning objective was met…and if not, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to rethink how the course was taught and work to create a better way to teach the material. Because of this extra work, adjunct faculty who teach GenEd courses are paid an additional $75.00/credit hour.

GenEd courses are important because, once these courses are complete, it is the hope of the University that graduates will have the ability to negotiate in contemporary society armed with appropriate thinking and communication skills. For a more in-depth look at the GenEd requirements please go to:
http://www.svsu.edu/fileadmin/websites/acadaffairs/GenEd_Category_Criteria.pdf

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