

Encourage Peer Instruction

Peer Instruction allows students to gather in small groups and discuss topics covered in class by using their own words to explain the concepts of the class to their peers.

This can be leveraged with clicker questions, which allow students to individually think about a question before discussion and can also allow for a comparison of the results before and after peer instruction.



Generating Small-Group Discussion:

Create Times for Telling – “Pose, Poll, Discuss”

- After a question, discuss not only the correct answer but why the others were not good answers
- Focus on the reasoning behind the answers rather than simply on the correctness of the right answer
- Encourage students to share their rationale behind their choice

“Think / Pair / Share” – small group discussion/peer instruction

- Have students respond to a clicker question individually before discussing the question in small groups. This leverages a classroom response system’s ability to allow all students a chance to think about a question independently of their peers.
- Withhold responses and indication of correct answer until after small group discussion.
- Encourage students to try to convince their peers why their choice is the correct answer.
- Have students discuss any confusion they have with their peers and try to figure out the answer together.



Handling Peer Instruction

Should students respond to a clicker question individually before engaging in PI?

- It encourages students to think independently and provides a chance for students to formulate a few thoughts they can bring to the PI time, creating the possibility of more productive small-group discussions

- Results of a first, individual set of response can affect the pace of the class.
- If students are fairly enthusiastic about discussing course content, instructors may find that they welcome the chance to jump right into small-group discussions.

Under what conditions should instructors skip PI after students respond individually?

- If results show that students strongly picked the correct answer, PI time will likely be unproductive.

What instructions should students be given for PI time?

- How groups should form
- Specify the task: "Share the reasons for your answer, come to a consensus on an answer"

Should each small group submit a single response following PI time?

- Gives each group a specific goal for their discussion time which can help students focus their attention and energy.
- Instructors who grade group responses on accuracy provide additional motivation for students to engage seriously in group discussion and consensus building.

How might an instructor lead a classwide discussion following PI time?

- If students answer a question twice, instructors can ask a student who changed his/her answer during the PI time to share with the class the reasons for that change.
- Ask for a student who did not change his/her answers to share with the class reasons why he/she did not find peers' arguments persuasive.
- Ask to hear from a group about the arguments shared during the group discussion time that were most persuasive.

References:

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