

RTC Faculty Focus

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Renton Technical College

Improving Classroom Discussions



RTC Media Librarian **Laura Staley** offers these websites on the topic of improving classroom discussions:

Suggestions for Facilitating Class Discussions. Sometimes it's easy to forget some of the finer points of facilitating class discussions. "A good class discussion involves students talking with students, not just with the professor. Thus, facilitators should resist the temptation to respond to every student comment." This page from Montana State University offers reminders about ways to encourage lively class discussions. <http://www.montana.edu/teachlearn/Papers/discussion.html>

Tired of the same old class discussions? Consider assigning students as co-facilitators. Purdue University suggests the benefits of co-facilitation: "The purpose of this type of activity is for students to gain experience in leading group discussions. This activity increases confidence levels, knowledge base, and understanding of proper methods for addressing complex material and issues in an open and sensitive manner." They offer a guide to make a co-facilitation assignment easier for students. <http://www.purdue.edu/odos/soc356x/facilitation.htm>

Improving online class discussions. How do you encourage students to participate in online discussions? How do you grade their efforts? This page offers useful suggestions, including rubrics. http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/col/id/discussion_strategies.php

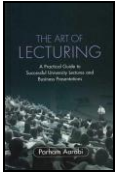
Universal Design for Learning Resources

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is about designing the classroom experience so that it is accessible to all learners. Below are some resources with information about UDL:

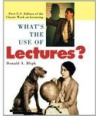
- *Curriculum Transformation and Disability: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education*, a 192-page PDF document edited by Jeanne L. Higbee. <http://tinyurl.com/4Y5me3u>
- RTC's UDL Project. <http://www.rtc.edu/AboutUs/DSDPGrant/>
- South Seattle Community College's video that illustrates how small changes in the classroom can help all students learn. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FE1CLS7i3k>
- U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education page on "Accessibility and Universal Design" <http://tinyurl.com/3gjb87v>

RTC Library Has Materials about Lecturing, Discussions and Universal Design

Call the RTC Library at ext. 2331 or visit <http://rtc.edu/library> for more info about these and other materials.



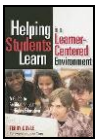
The Art of Lecturing: a Practical Guide to Successful University Lectures and Business Presentations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
Call Number: **371.396 AARABI 2007**



Bligh, Donald A. ***What's the Use of Lectures?*** San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, c2000.
Call Number: **371.396 BLIGH 2000**



Coombs, Norman. ***Making Online Teaching Accessible: Inclusive Course Design for Students with Disabilities.*** San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, c2010.
Call Number: **371.904334 COOMBS 2010**



Doyle, Terry. ***Helping Students Learn in a Learner-Centered Environment: a Guide to Facilitating Learning in Higher Education.*** Sterling, VA: Stylus Pub., 2008.
Call Number: **378.17 DOYLE 2008**



Spiegel, Dixie Lee. ***Classroom Discussion: Strategies for Engaging All Students, Building Higher-Level Thinking Skills, and Strengthening Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum.*** New York: Scholastic, c2005.
Call Number: **372.62044 SPIEGEL 2005**



Universal Design in Higher Education: From Principles to Practice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, c2008.
Call Number: **371.9043 UNIVERSA 2008d**



Voorhees, Alice Bedard. ***Increasing Engagement for Online and Face-to-Face Learners Through Online Discussion Practices.*** Phoenix, AZ: League for Innovation in the Community College, c2005.
Call Number: **371.334 VOORHEE 2005**

We Need Your Contributions and Suggestions

In the next few months, we plan to feature info about **active learning** and **cooperative** or **collaborative peer learning**. Contact newsletter editor, [Debbie Crumb](mailto:Debbie.Crumb@rtc.edu), with your tips, websites and suggestions. To access past issues, go to the Library's website at <http://rtc.edu/library>, click on **Services and Information**, then **Library Publications**, then **Recent issues published by RTC Library**, and finally on the desired format (**PDF** or **Word**).



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