



What Pedagogical Practices do Students Find Effective and Engaging?

What is this Research About?

Research shows that lectures are still the most commonly-used teaching method in higher education. Though lectures are commonly used, they may not be the best suited to supporting engaged learning. In this study, researchers interviewed students about what pedagogical practices they found engaging and effective.

What did the Researchers Do?

The researchers interviewed thirty-two undergraduate students about the pedagogical practices they found to be effective (i.e., increased knowledge) and engaging (i.e., were enjoyable). The students were also asked what practices and methods they had experienced that negatively impacted their learning. These interviews were semi-structured and relied on students' reports of teaching practices with no measure of grades. The researchers transcribed the interviews and coded the results to identify practices that students describe as engaging and effective.

What did the Researchers Find?

The researchers found that pedagogical practices described as engaging (i.e., enjoyable teaching methods) were not always described as effective (i.e., teaching methods that lead to learning and retention). The researcher grouped the students' responses into four themes: Engaging and effective, unengaging but effective, engaging but ineffective, and unengaging and ineffective. Students described recitations (i.e., class discussions), engaging lectures, real-life examples, and exercises and drills as both engaging and effective pedagogical practices. Students described lectures that used a lot of repetition, multiple low-stakes quizzes, and independent research, as unengaging but effective. In contrast, student presentations, graded class discussions, and boring lectures were described as unengaging and ineffective.

SoTL

Snapshot

A synopsis of a scholarship of teaching and learning journal article

➔ How to Implement this Research in Your Classroom

The researchers found that engaging pedagogical practices and effective pedagogical practices are not always the same from students' perspectives. The students' interview responses suggested that interpersonal, involved learning, such as in-class discussions, was described as effective and engaging. Instructors interested in fostering a more engaged learning environment could consider incorporating compulsory low-stakes quizzes throughout the semester to encourage an effective learning environment.

➔ Citation

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➔ Keywords

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