

Harnessing the “Approachability Factor”: Coupling KSU’s Supplemental Instruction Program with Active and Collaborative Learning Pedagogies

An Interactive Discussion led by Dr. Don Gammill, Jr., KSU Department of English

Active Learning Exercise: My First-Year College Experience

1. Pair up with the person sitting beside you and spend about 2 minutes each sharing what you recall about what you were thinking, feeling, and expecting at the *very beginning* of your first year of college.
2. Next, each of you spend about 2 minutes writing down those impressions in the space below (no need to list your name)

3. Now, you and your partner swap papers with another pair at the table.
4. Once you’ve gotten another pair’s papers, you and your partner work together for 2-4 minutes to analyze what the other pair wrote. Based on this brief analysis, make a list on each of your papers of the overarching themes you see present in their writings which may be common to first-year college students today.

5. Keep this list and be prepared to share as we discuss these attributes and how they might apply to the first-year students we teach now.
6. After this session is concluded, glance at this paper again and reflect on how actively collaborating to accomplish this activity a) provided heuristics to prompt recollection/inspire ideas, and b) leveraged the power of “an outside perspective” to multiply analytical capability.

Then consider how a trained peer mentor might have enhanced this learning by briefly checking in on and conversing with each pair, thus building rapport and a sense of community. How would that affect your likelihood of staying engaged?

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Learning Takeaway: Possible Applications for My Classes

1. Below, list a class you regularly teach which might be a good candidate for the coupling of active/collaborative learning activities with KSU Supplemental Instruction leaders or Learning Assistants:

2. Next, list one major topic/unit from that class (something you would dedicate a learning module to or spend a week covering) which would be a good candidate for some type of active/collaborative learning activity:

3. What might an active/collaborative learning exercise or experience attached to that unit look like?

4. In what ways might a Supplemental Instruction leader or Learning Assistant help facilitate that activity (based on them having one hour of prep time with you each week)?

For information about the KSU Supplemental Instruction and Learning Assistant programs, contact program director Mandy McGrew at (470) 578-6257 or mandymcgrew@kennesaw.edu