Teaching Tip: Stop and Go Strategies

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We often find ourselves, along with our students, racing to the finish line of the semester. What we should also remember is to take some time, slow down a bit, and even stop, is key too. Giving students time to slow down, reflect, connect the current material and competencies with earlier course material and, possibly, with other competencies in their program, is an important and effective way to help students learn, grasp, and understand the material at a deeper level.

Effective Stopping Techniques

There are many effective moments when stopping students will help them to re-focus, predict, and gather their knowledge and understanding of material or concepts that they need to know or review. The possibilities are endless. For inspiration consider:

Opportunities to Stop	Instructional strategy for students when they stop
1. Somewhere during a reading or film	Predict what happens next or the ending
1. During a lab setting	Discuss the probably results with lab partner
2. In class when students are sleepy or unfocused	Give them time to stand up, stretch, and breathe deeply
3. When beginning a new topic	Have students discuss with a partner what they already know about the topic
4. Reviewing a textbook, chapter, article	Encourage students to look at how the chapter or text is laid out on the page – look for clues of important points
5. Before a test or exam	Help students to consider all possibilities of what will be on the test or exam, what type of exam it will be, what material it will encompass

Stop and Go Strategies

When students are offered opportunities to stop for awhile and regain their focus, it is essential that we also offer concrete ways for them to 'get going' again too and to not lose their momentum. When we help students review what they have discussed when they stopped, finding ways to incorporate their findings and expectations into the reality of 'what's next', can be very powerful. When students accurately predict an ending or the results of a lab experiment, and then discover they were right, this is usually very exhilarating for them. Analyzing and predicting correctly what will most likely be on an upcoming exam, can really motivate students in their study techniques for the exam. Helping students periodically stop and then get started again can go a long way for them to gain a better understanding of the expected course competencies.

For an opportunity to discuss other Stop and Go Strategies, please contact Wilma Brown. Other online Teaching Tips are available on the PDO web page.

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