GIFTS
Great Ideas for Teaching Students
By Georgine Hodgkinson, Professor of Communication Studies

One of the best things about being CRC’s PD Coordinator has been the opportunity to talk about teaching with my colleagues. This experience confirms that we have amazing faculty on this campus! I have been impressed by instructional techniques shared at Teaching Circles, Flex workshops, OneBook events, and more. I also want to encourage us to continue Teaching and Learning conversations so I agreed to start a new Inside CRC series titled, GIFTS (Great Ideas for Teaching Students). Each GIFTS contribution will focus on a single classroom activity, assignment, or strategy. If the idea inspires you, great! If not, keep your eyes peeled for a different GIFTS, from a different faculty member, next week. (Brian Noel, Professor of Automotive Technology and Rhonda Farley, Professor of ESL, are up next).

This week’s idea is one example of how to facilitate active learning in the classroom. Name That Fallacy! is a Jeopardy-like game I play with my students to help them learn and recognize, common fallacies in reasoning. It is comprised of two rounds and played by 2-3 teams of 8-12 students each. Here’s how to play:

1) Students review a list of fallacy types and definitions (I give this as a homework assignment the class prior. Before the game starts, they put this handout away and are given a “game board” of the fallacy types without definitions).

2) There are two rounds:
   a. Round 1: Recalling Definitions (this round is fast and easy)
      Example: “This fallacy compares two ideas or objects that seemingly have similar characteristics, but the comparison does not hold up.” Answer: False Analogy
   b. Round 2: Fallacy Identification/application (this round is more challenging)
      Example: “Teachers, just like sports figures are role models for kids, therefore teachers should make as much money as professional athletes.” Answer: False Analogy

Teams take turns answering questions. Before I tell a team if they got the “right answer,” I ask the other team(s) if they want to “steal.”

Points awarded: 1 point for a correct answer, 0 points for an incorrect answer, 2 points for a correct steal, -1 for an incorrect steal. The opportunity to “steal” pricks at competitive nature and makes the game fun. This low-stakes competition arouses interest and promotes active learning in my classroom.

While this example highlights how “games” support active learning around fallacies, it could be adapted to innumerable subjects. Name That Grammer Rule!, Name That Mathematical Computation! and Name That Philosopher! are just waiting to be constructed.

If teaching techniques about active learning appeals to you, check out recently added information on this topic posted to the Faculty Resources page on the Center for Professional Development website: https://www.crc.losrios.edu/facstaff/pd/resources/faculty.

If you would like to contribute to GIFTS, contact Georgine Hodgkinson at hodgkig@crc.losrios.edu.