

**Instructional Strategies for Integrating Writing and Active Learning in Sport Management Classrooms**

*Angela Lumpkin, University of Kansas*  
*Becky Achen, University of Kansas*

**Teaching** **Friday, May 31, 2013** **20-minute oral presentation**  
**Abstract 2013-172** **3:35 PM** **(including questions)**  
**(Room 408)**

Relevance/Significance of the Topic to Sport Management Instructors

Classrooms today need to be learner-centered. Precise learning outcomes and comprehensive feedback used to measure and ensure student learning provide evidence of teaching effectiveness. Varied strategies embrace students' different ways of learning, challenge the shorter attention spans of students, and help connect what students know to new disciplinary content that makes sense to them and is pragmatically applicable. Sport management faculty need to integrate a variety of instructional strategies that connect with how students learn to improve their understanding and achieve educational goals.

Review of Relevant Literature

Angelo and Cross (1993) describe 50 classroom assessment techniques, such as the minute paper, concepts maps, and classroom opinion polls, that contribute to greater student learning. Collaborative learning, according to Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005) occurs through students actively interacting with peers during activities like buzz groups, fishbowl, jigsaw, peer editing, and think-pair-share. Brookfield and Preskill (2005) identify 15 benefits of discussion as catalysts for student engagement and learning and also support the use of snowballing and buzz groups. Bean (2011) argues persuasively that writing is essential to student engagement, deep learning, and critical thought and advocates that through the integration of writing activities students are better prepared for classes, participate more fully in discussions, and learn more. Bean provides numerous instructional strategies for incorporating low-stakes expository writing into a course, such as group blogs and double-entry notebooks, encouraging revisions in students' writing, helping students read difficult texts, and coaching students' critical thinking. Strategies suggested by all these authors have been used by two sport management instructors to measure progress in student learning, and encourage student engagement in reading and classroom discussions.

Clarity of Purpose/Objectives of the Presentation

The first purpose is to provide specific examples of using four sequential writing assignments (report on an interview of a professional in the field; research paper on an aspirational career; research paper on interim positions that would help prepare a person for the chosen career; and reflection paper about what was learned) in an introductory sport management course designed to help students gain increased knowledge of and understanding about careers in sport management will be described. The second purpose is to illustrate how four innovative instructional strategies, specifically classroom opinion polls using Poll Everywhere, expository writing assignments, minute papers, and group blogs, positively impacted student learning.

1. Classroom opinion polls—Used as a pre-assessment of knowledge, a check for understanding during discussion of a topic, to exhibit a practical connection to a student's life, or as a post-assessment; use Poll Everywhere for these polls by allowing students to use their smart phones, iPads, or laptop computers; identify questions or issues that students will have opinions about that could affect their learning; develop questions and post these on the Poll Everywhere website so you can view students' responses as they are posted; compile responses in Word documents to summarize information and communicate it to students

2. Expository writing assignments—Used to help students discover, develop, and clarify their ideas, these loosely structured, low-stakes assignments are incorporated throughout the course; suggestions for in-class writing include to probe a subject at the beginning of class, refocus the discussion during class, or at the end of class to summarize the class or check for understanding; examples of out-of-class exploratory writing could include double-entry notebooks, marginal notes, or practice essay exams; can be graded or non-graded

## 2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2013)

3. Minute papers—Near the end of class allow four or five minutes; ask students to briefly respond to two questions: “What is the most important thing you learned today in class?” and “What important question remains unanswered?”; compile responses and review common unanswered questions or review difficult material in class and post answers to all questions for student review

4. Group blogs—Using a course management system such as Blackboard, prompts (discussion questions) are provided for reading assignments; in groups of 6-8 students are required to post their answers by a deadline; assessment criteria can require demonstration of learning from the reading, inclusion of examples or insights learned from the readings, application of the reading to practical situations, and adding to posts of other students

### Potential for Impact on Teaching Quality

Teachers who use writing, a variety of instructional strategies, and active learning activities are delighted when they assess student learning and discover how effective these approaches are. Student feedback has been positive because students feel energized and engaged and are more willing to spend focused time in reading, writing, and thinking critically because these help them gain career-relevant knowledge and skills.

### Originality of Teaching Innovations Suggested

The practical application of the four sequential writing assignments has resonated with students. First, they learn that networking can begin with interviewing a person in a career of interest. Second, they soon appreciate the importance of conducting research to expand their knowledge and make more informed decisions about whether prospective careers may be right for them. Third, through their explorations they realize that there are multiple pathways for advancing into their prospective careers. Finally, through reflection, they are able to make sense of what they have learned, which serves as a solid foundation for future studies. Students enjoy and learn more when actively engaged. Because they are continually challenged to write about what they are learning and to interact with classmates while learning collectively, students more fully and effectively construct new knowledge. Students appreciate the instructional changes-of-pace in classes that eliminates passivity while making them feel that they are learning in relevant ways.

### References

- Angelo, T. A., & Cross, K. P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Barkley, E. F., Cross, K. P., & Major, C. H. (2005). *Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bean, J. C. (2011). *Engaging Ideas: The professor's guide to integrating writing, critical thinking, and active learning in the classroom* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brookfield, S. D., & Preskill, S. (2005). *Discussion as a way of teaching: Tools and techniques for democratic classrooms*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.