CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE
Fostering Student Engagement in the Classroom

Working together with a partner or in small groups, develop potential solutions to the teaching challenges outlined in the case study that has been assigned to your group. Prepare to share your teaching strategies and the rationales behind them with the larger group.

CASE STUDY #1

You have divided your students into small groups with instructions to complete a final project. The project is worth a significant portion of the grade, and several students have approached you with complaints about how one of their group members isn’t contributing equally. These students are worried that they will have to do most of the group’s work by themselves in order to earn a passing grade. What are some steps you might take in this situation to ensure group members contribute equally and to minimize the likelihood of bad group behavior in future assignments?

CASE STUDY #2

You’ve been incorporating group work activities into your classroom. Usually students work well together, but sometimes you notice that not all students are participating in their groups. Some remain silent, while others seem distracted and engaged in other tasks. How might you encourage every student to participate in classroom group work? What are some strategies you might try to keep students motivated and engaged in these activities?

For further information on this teaching resource and more, please contact the CTE at:
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CASE STUDY #3

You are trying to incorporate active learning strategies into one of your classes by pairing up students and asking them to discuss a question you present to the group. There is animated discussion in the class but you still have a lot of material to cover in that class. What would you do? Should you interrupt the discussion and move on? Should you provide the space to continue the discussion? What might happen if you shut the discussion down due to time constraints?

CASE STUDY #4

You explain to your students that they now have to turn to their partner and discuss the question for 5 minutes. There seems to be a lot of resistance but finally they start talking. At the end of class, a couple of students come up to you and complain about the activity. They seem to really resent having to learn from their colleagues and would like your perspective and knowledge to be shared. How do you respond to these students? What could you do to prepare your students for these kinds of activities?

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