

Timed team competition and the FYE orientation

For four semesters, I have used a timed team competition approach during my First Year Experience freshman library orientation sessions. These sessions are designed to introduce FYE students to library services and involves them working at computer terminals and completing a worksheet with various exercises and questions. Many of the classes have over 40 students enrolled, and we faced several challenges: how to keep the students engaged, how to keep the students on task and how to make the sessions memorable for the students.

I employ several instructional theories and methods in the class, including group learning, active learning, competition and timed exercises. There is ample evidence in the literature that supports each of these methods individually, and I have found a way to combine them successfully into one experience. Active learning and the timed aspect keeps the students focused on the task and infuses the concept of a deadline, group learning makes them responsible to each other, and the competitive nature keeps them excited.

This approach has been extremely successful in teaching the students familiarity with library services, and instructors have reported that this is the approach of choice as compared with the traditional library orientation lecture. During this presentation, I will present a sample exercise for the attendees to experience, after which we will discuss ways to infuse the various methods into their own classroom experiences.