



Teaching Concerns

Newsletter of the Teaching Resource Center for Faculty and Teaching Assistants

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Thinking Together: Collaborative Learning in Science

Harvard University: Derek Bok Center for Teaching & Learning, 1992. 18 minutes.

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Thinking Together focuses on a group of professors in scientific disciplines who have come to question traditional teaching methods that all too often breed passivity in students. The teachers explain their dissatisfactions with standard pedagogical methods and their reasoning behind altering the way they operate their classrooms. They discuss experiments with various methods designed to increase student participation. The video takes a largely nuts-and-bolts approach, demonstrating how active learning principles and group problem-solving techniques can be applied even in the largest lecture classes. Professors note that applying such methods can result in both greater understanding of the material and a higher confidence level among students. At the same time, the instructors note the limitations of cooperative learning strategies. The principles demonstrated in this useful primer are applicable not only in the sciences but all disciplines.