

It Sounded Like a Good Idea....

The Institute Effective Teaching Committee collected your stories of classroom activities that you tried – but that didn't quite go as planned. Here is the collection of faculty tales, along with lessons learned and tips for those of you considering trying something new in your own class. The top vote-getters from our follow-up survey are in **bold**.

How do RIT faculty feel about taking a chance on something new related to your class or teaching?

21 - I'll try anything.

53 - I'll try it if I'm fairly confident that it will succeed and be an improvement.

5 - I'll try it if I'm positive it's going to work and be an improvement.

1 - Change is bad.

All submissions of faculty mishaps, along with the lessons learned are attached here. They fell into seven broad categories, and you can read on to learn from someone else's mistakes!

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Tips for trying out new activities:

The full list is included at the end of this document (p. 15), but the common themes include:

- Plan ahead/practice
- Go slowly (pilot or incremental implementation)
- Be patient if it doesn't work the first time
- Just do it!

Student-led instruction/discussions/evaluations

Oops: Assigning presentations on material on which all the students will be tested is very risky. You are depending on the students clearly conveying the information their classmates will need.

Lesson Learned: Risk mitigation approaches: Design your test with many test questions from which students pick only a very small number on topics that they hopefully did understand. Make the presentations a bigger part of the course so that you require them to submit their materials early for the instructor's review. At least one revision cycle should occur.

Oops: I tried to put one student in charge of rewarding other students for doing well in class via tossing them candy. But he was too shy and didn't really get into the spirit of things.

Lesson Learned: I'll toss the candy myself from now on. It's tempting to give students roles and responsibility in class, but it has to be done carefully, in a low-pressure kind of way.

Oops: I wanted to avoid lecturing about a book, so I gave each student a specific chapter to discuss in class and to lead class discussion about it. It worked out for only about 25% of the class who did a good job and asked interesting questions. The rest were badly done and the class was bored with the level of presentation.

Lesson Learned: It's tough to hand over responsibility to the class. Maybe next time I would meet with each student to make sure he/she has done the work and has planned the time well.

Oops: I've tried group presentations that completely bombed. Students were bored out of their minds and also irritated at their classmates.

Lesson Learned: That you need to plan group work very carefully and make sure there's an outlet for students to evaluate each other's work.

Oops: Have students present their ongoing research to their classmates, about midway through their research, so that we can all see how much progress the students are making and all provide valuable feedback.

Lesson Learned: That our students do not really understand what constitutes research and are usually unwilling to take risks (confront the unknown). Many want instant gratification.

Oops: The students had to teacher particular sections in the book rather than me teaching them myself. They were not adequately prepared and were not able to engage the students in the class through dialog as I might be able to.

Lesson Learned: It is a great idea! Just have to figure out how to prepare the students better and how to teach them how to teach better even though this is a mathematics course and not a course on the path of becoming a teacher.

Oops: self-grading: I had the students be responsible for assessing another student for a project grade. Most of the grades came out the same, about a B average. They were all a little too nice or frightened of each other to really be critical. Although that aspect did not work very well, I do believe it helped them to really consider their own performance and think about grading criteria. This year I had them assess each other, but not so individually and I made it a contest -- there were prizes awarded. Interestingly enough, their assessment -- as the most successful projects -- was pretty much right in line with my own.

Lesson Learned: Continue to try new and different way to make the students a part of the assessment process.

Oops: I had students write in questions over email, I removed their names, and used them as handouts to start discussion.

Lesson Learned: If you do it set a time limit as to when they can send them. Don't do it with a larger class. VERY time intensive

Oops: Engaging students in open-ended questions.

Lesson Learned: Keep the questions focused and free of generalized answers

Oops: Often times, when the class is stale, I will try to give the room a little more freedom to discuss subjects that I thought will interest them. Sometimes it works and sometime it does not. Students may not respond to such purposely created interactive class activity.

Lesson Learned: Just need to react quickly and gauge the reason that the class is stale. It could be students just finished a tiring exam before this class. If that is the case, just teach lighter material in the class and let them be.

Group Work

A top vote getter!

Oops: group work - having discussions/group projects the first time I didn't worry about group size - it turns out to be one critical factor - I allowed one 'supergroup' in a class

Lesson Learned: Don't allow large groups! For most projects 3 to 4 students is the ideal number.

Oops: I tried having students work together in a group on the very first night on something they didn't understand - they were VERY resistant. I hadn't done enough to have them build a relationship with each other (and me) to have them trust each other.

Lesson Learned: If it had been something simple or something relatively clear, I think it might have been okay - more as an "ice breaker" to get used to group work - which they were not very comfortable or familiar with.

Oops: Group work with not enough parameters...

Lesson Learned: you need boundaries, guidelines, instructions to make it work

Oops: I went to a pedagogy workshop and learned all about using active learning and putting students into groups - including using folders to organize the students and their work, and giving the students markers to decorate their folders and name their team.... I tried it with my Freshman Symposium class, and they were SO unenthusiastic and thought it was all stupid. Over the quarter, it was the most hostile class I've ever dealt with, and I wonder if it's because they saw the whole thing as rather juvenile. Eventually I abandoned the whole idea.

Lesson Learned: I think I tried to do too many things at once that were new to me. Maybe if I'd tried implementing just ONE thing I learned from the workshop, things would have gone more smoothly?

Oops: I tried having several small group activities, but in my large lecture class it is difficult.

Lesson Learned: I am trying to work with other faculty with large classes to develop ways in which to better engage the students. iClickers just aren't enough anymore.

Oops: I have a class that has a lab component (4 labs per quarter). I almost always assign lab partners, with the constraint that no two people can work together more than twice. One quarter I made the mistake of allowing people to choose their partners, provided they stuck to the aforementioned constraint. It was a disaster.

Lesson Learned: It is much better (and more representative of the real world) to randomly assign partners.

Oops: I tried collaborative quizzing. I gave the students eight low stakes quizzes individually and after each one I let them take the same test in pairs. The quizzes were then reviewed in class and posted with the correct answers on myCourses. I hoped that by giving them the opportunity to collaborate they would learn from each other and I would see a large improvement in midterm and final exam grades.

Lesson Learned: I did not see a significant improvement in exam grades. Neither the collaboration nor the repetition appeared to improve learning.

Oops: I gave a problem that required to apply what we just have discussed and asked the students to work in groups of 2 or 3. They could ask me whatever they wanted. At the end I called randomly some of the groups for their solution.

Lesson Learned: The students usually don't like the experience because they need to think on their feet.

Oops: I had them work in peer-review groups with a carefully structured set of questions.

Lesson Learned: If you use peer review, demand written reports but leave the questions fairly open.

Tools/Technology/Textbook

Oops: I gave an assignment where I asked students to make use of a new software package which I had not worked with before. After the first week, I realized that the learning curve to use the software was way too steep. I had to drop the assignment.

Lesson Learned: The next time that I taught that course, I added a "research" assignment. Here I allow students to select from a small set of research topics which will require them to explore well beyond what we have done in class. I assure them that grading will be based on what they accomplish, and also showing due diligence at tackling the problem. A good grade is still achievable with due diligence even if not a lot was accomplished. This is where I often

introduce new tools that I have not worked with. I guide students through exploration of the tools, and creating tutorials.

Oops: Had students build a blog using wordpress for an Internet Marketing class. The experience was very positive for the students however it led to several issues that could not be anticipated. International students had issues with using credit cards to pay for the account, some students had no idea what to blog about and the computers in the lab did not co-operate. In the end the students loved it and said it was the most enjoyable part of the class but it meant so much more work for the instructor.

Lesson Learned: Get software installed and checked at computer labs before the quarter. Develop help files for those who could potentially have trouble. Get an assistant that is well versed in these issues.

Oops: Technology usually manages to be more complicated to use than originally imagined.

Lesson Learned: The usual advice is be prepared with a standard class.

Oops: I-clickers: The set up time was not worth it when I had to change classrooms in 10 minutes. IF I hadn't moved OR if I had a big class, maybe I'd feel differently but with 35 students, it was more work than it was worth.

Lesson Learned: Don't go overboard integrating technology in class!

Oops: I taught Intro to Journalism in a computer lab. I thought having computers available would help discussions as we could pull up current media and evaluate it in real time. Unfortunately, the class had a hard time paying attention to me at the front of the room. When I would talk - or even show clips on the main screen - students checked e-mail, wrote papers, etc. The computers were too much of a distraction.

Lesson Learned: "Smart classrooms" aren't always a smart choice.

Oops: Computer simulation in a lab I was told the software was installed. However critical components of the software were not installed (the full-package was not installed, just the base) and the exercise went south

Lesson Learned: Always test the exercise outside of class-time before you go "live".

Oops: I allowed students to use information from Wikipedia for primary sources for a major assignment.

Lesson Learned: I learned two things. Wikipedia served a great starting place, but contained errors and information that sometimes conflicted with current thoughts surrounding topics students wished to discuss. Students had a tendency to rely upon Wikipedia as the ultimate source of information and seldom followed-up to double check primary literature for verification.

Oops: I tried creating an analysis tree using mapping software to help my students troubleshoot when writing their conclusions in their lab reports. Although the conclusions were now including the correct buzz words, they were still pretty dire. It did not seem to improve their thinking process in the way I expected it to.

Lesson Learned: I'm still working on the software glitches and I've now scripted a conclusions paragraph where they now have to use the analysis tree AND the paragraph when writing their conclusions. I've learned to:
a. not give up on the idea and continuously solicit feedback to make it better
b. not expect miracles
c. understand that fundamentally the students' writing is not where it should be and that is a problem in and of itself.

Oops: Tried out a textbook for a multi-disciplinary class hoping for a solid anchor for theoretical discussions. 1. The textbook's ideological slant marred the content - too much for many students, 2. The balance of in-class vs. online discussion was severely thrown off by an RIT snow/ice day and an instructor sick day. They (and I) wanted time to discuss the many issues raised and online was not a sufficient substitute.

Lesson Learned: Don't expect students to look beyond flaws in teaching materials and be able to focus on only the aspects you care about. If teaching days "disappear," reduce and refocus significant missed content for make-up rather than trying to fit it in an exclusively online mode.

Oops: Teaching glycolysis to 2nd and 3rd year students. I tried teaching it in the through video but the students didn't quite get it.

Lesson Learned: I learned that there can be a disconnect between visual representation and what is actually in the textbook

Inside and outside of the Classroom

Oops: I made my students write their notes in landscape.

Lesson Learned: Students don't like to be forced to do stuff even if it's better.

A top vote getter!

Oops: I tried to help the students know where to put items after a lab was finished. I wrote 18" x 10" signs and stood them on pedestals to help them see where items should be placed. Few students read the signs...and even did exactly OPPOSITE what the sign indicated. It never did resolve through the whole quarter. We are still trying to solve the issue. It really relates to their understanding of the class and the techniques they are supposed to be learning in this class

Lesson Learned: students are NOT being instructed to be aware of the signs in their environment. International students are the main culprit from our experience. Sometimes even a personal request does not elicit the appropriate response. We are concerned that the students are NOT learning proper techniques from this class from our observations of their activities. Ee have actually contacted our Dept. Head who is going to begin a new lab training session for the incoming freshman because of our concerns and observations of their behavior.

A top vote getter!

Oops: Field trip - even though I'd scouted the location and prepared questions (for Eastman House), it turned out an exhibit had closed in the intervening week! That screwed things up.

Lesson Learned: Scout locations very close to the time of one's visit to a site.

Oops: I took my class on a field trip to Corning Museum of Glass a few years (2003) ago. The student's liked the experience and Corning donated free admission for us.

Lesson Learned: The logistics of transportation made me not wish to have any other field trips. I requested and got funding from INTERACTIVE LEARNING SUPPORT, but had difficulty getting reimbursed for the approved expenses.

Instructor Faux Pas

A top vote getter!

Oops: As an ice breaker on the first day in a class on professional communications, I have each student pair up with another student, interview each other and then present the other person to the rest of the class. The first time I tried this I decided to match the students up by giving each one an index card with a black word on the front and a different red word on the back. I told them that they were the black word, and their goal was to find the person in the room whose black word matched their red word. It was a disaster because it didn't occur to me while creating the cards that the black/red words on one card had to match the red/black words on another card - the words were just randomly placed on cards. So instead of them all interviewing each other at once, most students had to wait for another interview to finish before they could begin. Needless to say, after 2 hours most had not finished interviewing, and they didn't get a chance to introduce their partner to the rest of the class. It also made me look like an idiot to the students (on the first day of class!)

Lesson Learned: Make sure cards match. It works great now.

Oops: I used raffle tickets to encourage people to do the reading before class. I was then planning to ask them to explain concepts before the material was covered. The first time I tried it I had not prepared the questions carefully enough and students were puzzled by the questions. It worked better the second time.

Lesson Learned: Make sure there is better preparation and don't be afraid to try it again.

Oops: I develop "stories" or scenarios" that involve class members as different participants. As I go I add participants and/or change some roles they are playing. Sometimes this goes very well and there are spirited exchanges and discussions about the situation(s). It can create an awkward moment when you assign a person a role and the role you give to them mirrors an emotional real life circumstance. I once assigned a role where there was a seriously handicapped person who needed so much care that the aging parents were unable to care for them and the student had to drop out of school. Sigh! This resembled the person's circumstances and caused some distress. I, of course, didn't know this and quickly apologized.

Lesson Learned: Be alert to the dimensions of what you are creating. And, be ready to correct unanticipated "errors."

Oops: An icebreaker with tin foil that turned out badly - I asked the students to fashion a sheet of foil into something representing themselves...most did fine but some had breakdowns...one woman tore hers into little bits and said that was her life, another made a shaft and said he was getting shafted...although some made more positive things such as an arrow for going forward. I won't do that one again.

Lesson Learned: To be more specific in my requests and to realize that those faces sitting out there may mask some serious emotions.

Oops: Peer-editing of papers in an online class. It was just too cumbersome setting it up and organizing students. My fault, not the fault of myCourses or the students. Live and learn.

Lesson Learned: Take a little more time when herding cats.

Oops: AOS deaf students in a history of graphic design class have a distinct English language disadvantage. In an effort to link a movement's visual characteristics with descriptive terms, I invited the class to describe introduced images from a particular historical movement using sign language. I recorded their contributions of terms (in English) on the blackboard. Together we determined common terms (with my guidance) and those terms were to be used to describe that design movement (as well as apply to other movements that would be introduced).

Lesson Learned: This took up too much class time, and became too confusing because of the variety of different responses. I think the scope needs to be more controlled and not as extensive. Enough time needs to be set aside, so lesson plans need revision. But I may try this idea again, in a more structured way.

Student Autonomy/responsibility

Oops: Trying to get students to follow current events regarding issues related to the course, and making it a graded element, so to make it happen. Students were resistant to it, and it was difficult to test to see if students were doing it.

Lesson Learned: Don't make an item a graded element, unless there is a fair and workable way to test for it.

Oops: I am doing a technical elective this quarter and experimenting with having the students develop a portfolio ranging from literature research through performance modeling using

dynamic spreadsheets (they create) and making "pitches" for development of a wind farm project. Originally 8 projects to be assembled into a professional package on the subject of wind power technology. Each assignment has been graded in lieu of exams. What did not work is attendance has been spottier than I would like. I added another assignment to "force" learning of material missed.

Lesson Learned: Be flexible and adapt what you are doing to what is happening. As long as I am creating an environment where genuine learning is possible I am not going to "sweat" the other problems, but adjust. Next time I will add a daily quiz on the days reading assignment (3 minutes) and that 10% of class grade will ensure good attendance.

Oops: I was teaching 3rd year students, and decided to give them more autonomy. I told them that I would not grade their weekly homework assignments, but that they were responsible for knowing all the material covered in the assignments. We reviewed the assignments in class and worked many problems on the board. When test time came around it was obvious that about half the class was not doing the assignments.

Lesson Learned: RIT students are very good at prioritizing. If your class is not near the top of their to-do list, it will not get done.

Oops: I allowed HW to determine only a small portion of the course grade (directly), and told my students why: HW is supposed to be the place where they practice and learn, not a place where I assess their mastery of topics.

Lesson Learned: Largely, students don't do what's best for them. The promise of learning what they're supposed to learn, and coming away from the course with knowledge and skills is not enough for them. They have learned too well this strange economy of "points." Ironically, many students will slave for hours in order to earn a few extra credit points, but they won't put in the time necessary to do well in the first place (so that they don't need the EC points).

Oops: Family History Project - the students were to ask a minimum of 6 family members a series of questions connected to elements of sociology studied in class. It was to be done over the Winter break. I figured since many of them were going home it would be pretty easy to do - and more fun to do it face to face. When they returned less than a 1/4 of the class had done the work. One student even asserted he didn't have a family (not even a family of choice!)

Lesson Learned: The students are protective of their families and asking them to share personal stuff or use it for class purposes doesn't work as well as asking them to use friends, activities or events here on campus.

Oops: I tried to have a five minute current events section in my class in which students read something in a newspaper, watched the news, or read a news site and came into class ready to discuss something going on in Asia. It turns out that students weren't interested, or I wasn't interesting enough!

Lesson Learned: Students are not all that engaged with international news!

Oops: Asking to read the book before coming to class and asking questions based on that.

Lesson Learned: Students don't tend to read the book.

Oops: In an attempt to have even introductory students learn the science of child development more actively, I designed a data collection experiment for them to complete on their own time. Each student did a content analysis of some form of media (usually television) and measured things like the representation of boys vs. girls in TV ads, or the range of ethnicities in leading vs. subordinate roles on children's TV shows. The data were great, as far as I could tell, but students with no background in data presentation had a hard time getting their information across.

Lesson Learned: I liked the "go find out yourself" aspect of the assignment, but in the future I will build in more time to set up the experiment (particularly by presenting the data in the form that conveys its meaning), and also more time to discuss it afterwards. As outcomes, the students wrote a paper and had a short discussion with classmates, which I would expand and change. I could have asked groups who studied the same topic (e.g., gender) to present their results when the lecture topic is gender, so the class as a whole gets the benefit of the knowledge each student has gained.

Oops: Going around the room to ask why each student was taking the class (on the first day of class). It turns out that most of them were taking it just because it was required. That information was rather depressing.

Lesson Learned: Do not go around the class live to ask why the students are taking the class.

Oops: Take home exams for my undergraduate classes

Lesson Learned: too easy for the students to cheat

Oops: On the 3rd exam of the quarter, I gave students the questions ahead of time--trying to relieve some of their stress. I did not see that this raises the temptation to try to cheat--cell phones, writing on hands/sleeves, crib sheet. I had to rigorously police 50' of exam time. Not fun

Lesson Learned: To ban checking messages and texts during an exam--I only had 1-2 students who were an issue--but it caught me off guard.

Experiments/Demonstrations/Simulations

A top vote getter!

Oops: I tried an in class activity to demonstrate the Primacy and Recency effects during a class on memory and graphed the results on the white board. Unfortunately, students remembered many words from right in the middle of the list and not necessarily more words at the beginning (primacy) or end (recency) of the list -- the opposite of what would be expected. Also, because I "graphed" the results on the white board, it took more time than I expected for lousy results!

Lesson Learned: I think I may have hurried through the activity or shown a list that was too short, in order to fit the activity into the class. I also should have prepared an overhead if a blank graph that was set up to illustrate the class results. What I learned is if you're going to do something to prove a point, then make sure you are thoroughly prepared and don't hurry through it. If it's important enough to demonstrate, take the time to do it right.

Oops: Once I tried actually designing and running a tabletop simulation in a class to make a point that came up in a discussion. Three students immediately stepped in to help run it, but in general the execution was a bit clunky and too many of the students in the room did not really "get" the message because the running of the model was not smooth.

Lesson Learned: The principle of PDCA is always there. Before trying something, we need to plan - formulate a hypothesis about the likely effect of the planned action - and then do the "do" step. I tried to cheat the "P" step and paid the price.

Oops: I tried to incorporate a simulation game into the classroom.

Lesson Learned: I learned that students wanted something more intuitive. Also, as a group they were less willing to experiment than I had hoped.

A top vote getter!

Oops: I tried to do an in-class experiment to demonstrate conservation of momentum using a 2x6, a shipping & receiving cart, a cinder block, and lots of clamps. I measured coefficients of friction and rolling resistance, tried the experiment out a few times on my own, and thought everything was ready to go. In class, nothing worked as planned. Couldn't get the same cart, the clamps kept slipping, I was nervous and kicked the whole setup so it didn't start out at rest - all the calculations I had the students do to try to predict what would happen ended up being way off.

Lesson Learned: I started frantically trying to figure out what went wrong and was talking out loud, and the class started chiming in - later on, I found out that most of the class thought they learned a lot from it (this was from a SGID done later in the semester). So now I know that if a demo goes wrong, it's OK to engage the class in a troubleshooting discussion and highlight all the questionable assumptions that I made, along with changes in the environment that might have led to the problems, and the differences between the ideals modeled in an equation and the reality of real stuff in real life.

Oops: A role-playing segment on how computers work!

Lesson Learned: I need to make things simpler not more complicated - it too many moving parts.. visual animation would have been better.

Oops: I once invited guests to my class to conduct mock job interviews with students. I found the mock job interviews difficult at times due to "no specific job" being sought. The result was awkward moments for students who felt they couldn't respond as well due to no specific job being sought.

Lesson Learned: I decided to do "informational interviews" instead of "mock job interviews". I still invited outside guests (persons in industry) to conduct the one-on-one informational interviews. Students felt more empowered to talk about themselves. Things went well.

Tips for trying new activities in the classroom

- Find a way to require full class participation but without making a significant part of the students' grades depend upon the new thing's success.
- do it. It keeps you fresh and likely stimulates the class.
- Do not be afraid to try new things, but spend some time thinking through the application within your course.
- Try it out with a smaller class first and attempt to create videos instead of taking the students through the process in the class. Keep abreast of any updates etc that could change the interface significantly between versions. Use an assistant with you in class simultaneously to take care of issues.
- Try it. Prepare first.
- Try out the idea with a small number of students, as a pilot or optional assignment.
- I tell students this is a new activity or approach - I will appreciate your cooperation and feedback as we "experiment."
- It's tempting to want to empower students in the classroom, but giving away professorial duties to students can confuse them and breed chaos.
- Go for it if it will get more student involvement.
- Play it fully out in your mind first, or better yet, have a dry run with someone who will volunteer to play the role of the student.
- Plan ahead for possible outcomes.
- try it
- Try in increments, say one period near the end of the term where some understandings have been created. That way if there is a disaster, one can recover. I sometimes preface an "adventure" with, "What happens in Vegas; stays in Vegas." I think this can create a bit of a comfort zone for one and all.
- Be brave and try it out. Stop listening to the naysayers. If things don't work out the way you hoped, then modify and try again the next time.
- THink it through and assess how much risk you want to take.
- Make sure you factor in all possible outcomes of your new approach.
- Know option B.
- Give students to choose which books they like instead of faculty.
- try it, and be observant to the results because sometimes the results are not what you had anticipated. I would like to this quote from Roy Snoke mounted in all labs ---Do not leave your brain outside the door when you come into a lab" (meaning bring along your common sense----lots of new students freeze up in a lab and forget how to do the simple things)
- See if you can find someone who has already tried it and learn from them. But then, go ahead and give it a try. If it doesn't work out, stop doing it.

- Don't try something once and then get rid of it prematurely unless it is a truly horrid idea that students hate and it takes a toll on their performance in the classroom and on exams. Tweak it, be patient and give it a chance. Trying something new is never perfect the first time around.
- Plan ahead as much as possible. it's difficult to think about all possible outcomes, but the more problems you can foresee in a new project, the better.
- Maybe try teaching the topic both ways, visual and lecturing
- do it
- Experience the IdeaTools - it provides lots of features for teaching.
- Go for it. Students love it, and I think all faculty understand that (done well) novelty can be both a motivator and reward. Some students perform better when the requirements of a course are non-typical, and all students have to 'wake up' and pay attention.
- Because many of my classes involve experiential learning, I always encourage innovation in the classroom. Just do it!
- Go slowly and don't try to do too many new things at once.
- Go for it.
- Practice it first all by yourself. Check the time it takes for you to do it. Have a backup plan prepared in advance, in case things don't go well. As you are doing it in front of the class for the first time, check student reactions frequently. If you see that you have lost many of the students, go to a backup plan.
- If possible, try a simulated version on your own before doing it in class to; hopefully, discover any bumps that may occur. Don't be hard on yourself. Understand that, if the new thing is not a success it does not mean you're not a good teacher.
- Try it! Just accept it will probably take 3 times to get it right:)
- Think it through.
- You have to imagine what it would be like to do this new thing if you were a student.
- Do it.
- Have a plan, rehearse it in some way first, even if by yourself in your office. The engineering design process teaches us to test things to validate the expected results before buying components or cutting metal - the same idea applies in the class room.
- Go ahead and try it - you'll never know if it works or not. Make it a small scale experiment. You can even tell the students you are trying something new, and get their feedback on if it works, from their perspective.
- To realize that this is an entirely new generation--and they are plugged in constantly!
- Do it. The students appreciate anything that isn't sitting in a chair listening to a lecture.
- Step out and do it, but have a back up plan.
- I've found students are usually pretty positive about trying new things, as long as you show them that you're flexible. I've had real success by just keeping the lines of communication open with them, for example by explaining why I'm trying this particular new thing.

- Just try it! It might fail in a flaming ball of fire ... but you will have tried! And, in the smoldering remains, you may find a diamond in the rough. A little polish ... and the next try might just be the one!
- Try taking a scholarly approach by thinking of it as a proper experiment. Then spread the results.
- Let the students know - you are going to try some experimental techniques - and that their feedback will help build better classes in the future.
- go ahead
- Think about it and prepare well ahead of time.
- Plan out as much as you can, but think about how you will handle surprises. Realize that failure can be a powerful teaching tool.
- Get an opinion from your wife who has a Ph.D in Education.
- While trying something new might work, and might even make the course more interesting for you, don't try something just for the sake of trying something. If it is not well thought out, it probably won't work well, and you will spend time cleaning up the mess.
- "Trust but verify"
- I have found that in so many classes the IT system is terrible. Other non-technical universities have smart podiums for faculty, so you don't have to schlep around a laptop and hope it works, for instance. Our largely unsmart classroom spaces really discourage me from incorporating too much power point, images, video clips. Just yesterday it took a visit from IT support to run the VCR. And it took him awhile to figure out what was wrong! I cannot afford to build a lecture with a lot of technological elements because I don't really know that any of that will work. SO I stick to what I know will work--a white board pen and xeroxed handouts.
- Since most students (that I've encountered) want to put in the minimum amount of time and effort required, assignments and tasks have to be well thought out in terms of value to the student, and then presented as such.
- Consider outside factors- timing in the qtr, timing within the curriculum, the student dynamic, student perspective (is it something that you personally would "like" but a student would not be as excited about). TRY ANOTHER TIME!
- Start with problems for which the theory has already been developed.
- Be bold and don't lose hope after a few tries
- Pilot it with a small group of students whom you know and trust. At least talk it through with them. They like it and can give you good advice.
- Make sure you have a way to assess its impact on student learning. 2. Until you have assessed its value to learning make it a low stakes item when it comes to its weight on the final course grade.
- Ask your students what they think.
- Definitely try new things, but be prepared for unexpected results, both good and bad.

- If you try something and it doesn't work initially, tinker with it, it may.
- Be ready to have it not work!
- Make sure that your students--esp. deaf/hh students are aware of the new changes, and let them know you will be trying something differently. Keep in MIND that they are visual people, and they need to be able to "see" something to grasp your concept of ideas or thoughts you are trying to convey in the classroom.
- Be open to getting student comments about how successful the project was -- they can be quite honest regarding what they feel works and doesn't work.
- Try it a few times with several classes - each class has it's own chemistry and dynamic. What works brilliantly with one class folds like a lawn chair with the next. Your ability to explain it and give direction will improve and their willingness to try out something new will vary regardless of your fitness.
- Schedule a couple of in class "how's it working discussions" and of course explain the "experiment" and why you are doing it going into the class. A course works because of both students and faculty.
- one should always be trying to improve one's teaching
- Trying something new is a good idea. We should also be honest with ourselves about (a) whether it promotes our principles (e.g., for me, learning is the important, not passing paper and graphite back and forth), and (b) whether it's achieving the desired goals.
- Try it, by all means, but plan carefully. Spontaneity is often a bad choice.
- Be careful as students can be VERY judgmental. Maybe try to get the class behind you on the innovation and have them help you critique it.
- Have a plan b in mind. Even if you have the best discussion planned out, be ready for "the non-response" (something that requires student effort).
- Go for it! We all learn from our mistakes.