Intervention Techniques for Classroom Facilitators

Intervention can be defined as a facilitator’s interruption during the learning process. Intervention is used to redirect students’ attention (e.g., so students can get back on track) or to address the level of challenge students are experiencing. It is important to recognize that choosing not to intervene is also a powerful tool available to instructors using active learning strategies.

Intervention techniques fall into several categories

**Affirming**
- Recognize the good work students are doing (process and outcomes; class or group level)
- Join a group – sit down and just listen (values the students’ process)

**Inquiring**
- Ask directed questions (questions related to information processing)
- Ask convergent questions (questions that have an expected answer)
- Rephrase a student question
- Send spies to eavesdrop on other teams

**Infusing**
- Supply needed clarifying information (“just in time” lecturing or reiterate instructions)
- Answer student questions (directly or with additional questions)
- Use student consultants to help a struggling team
- Use parallel reporting (all spokespeople go to the board at the same time)

**Assessing**
- Provide teams with information about their strengths, areas for improvement, and insights about their teamwork (SII assessment)
- Request that teams do a self-assessment (e.g., SII) of their teamwork
- Conduct classroom assessment (e.g., muddiest point)

**Challenging**
- Ask divergent questions (questions with more than one good answer)
- Identify students to serve as consultants to other teams
- Elevate a question (e.g., take a lower order thinking question student have asked and turn it into a higher order question)

**Expediting**
- Adjust activity on the fly
- Provide resources (websites, books, handouts)
- Refocus (ask questions to get students back on track)
- Change expectations to manage frustration
- Adjust time constraints

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1 Adapted from [http://www.pcrest3.com/fgb/efgb4/3/3_2_8.htm](http://www.pcrest3.com/fgb/efgb4/3/3_2_8.htm) (from A Faculty Guidebook—A Resource for Faculty Development)