

Art and Science of Teaching

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Chapter 2. What will I do to help students effectively interact with new knowledge?

Throughout a well-structured unit teachers are continually providing input to students regarding new content. Sometimes this occurs in the form of answers to questions, discussions with individual students, discussions with small groups of students, and other types of rather spontaneous interactions. At other times, input is planned as a part of the overall design of the unit. For example, a teacher might plan to have students engage in one or more of the following activities: read a section of the textbook, listen to a lecture, observe a demonstration, be part of a demonstration, or watch a video. I refer to these designed input activities as critical-input experiences. If students understand the content provided in these critical-input experiences, they have a good start toward the accomplishment of learning goals. To increase students' understanding of the content inherent in these experiences, teachers should facilitate students' actively processing the content.

In the Classroom

Let's return to the classroom scenario described in the previous chapter. One of the first things Mr. Hutchins asks students to do is view a video on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Prior to showing the video, he asks students if they have ever seen or read anything about these two cities in Japan and what happened to them at the end of World War II. He emphasizes that he does not expect them to know anything yet but wonders if some students have ideas about what occurred. As students volunteer responses, Mr. Hutchins summarizes them briefly on the whiteboard. He then organizes students into groups of three. Each member of the group is assigned a letter—A, B, or C. Mr. Hutchins tells students that they should feel free to record ideas in their academic notebooks as they watch, but he cautions that they should not try to take notes per se. He says: Just watch the video and try to understand what is being presented. We'll watch this in small bits or chunks about four minutes each, and you will have time to talk about each little bit as we go through it. You'll also have time to take notes later when you have a better understanding of the information.

Retrieved from- <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/107001/chapters/What-will-I-do-to-help-students-effectively-interact-with-new-knowledge%20%A2.aspx>

Video- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIfv-XEBKxE>