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GREAT IDEAS IN TEACHING

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ISU College of Education, ISU Center for Learning and Instructional Excellence,
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Active Learning Made Simple: Using Nearpod to Drive Student Participation

Don Hastings, EdD

Assistant Professor, Department of School Psychology and Educational Leadership
College of Education

Effective teaching in today's learning environments—whether in traditional classrooms, online, or hybrid settings—involves more than simply delivering content; it requires strategies that keep students engaged, challenged, and enmeshed in learning. This presentation introduces a small component of the Nearpod as a platform that helps instructors move from traditional, instructor-centered models to student-driven, interactive experiences.

Nearpod is an online platform similar to PowerPoint and Google Slides. However, it is interactive, promotes real-time feedback, integrates multimedia, includes polls and gamified activities, and provides instructors with tools to personalize instruction while encouraging deeper levels of critical thinking. Rather than relying on a passive "sit-and-get" model, students are encouraged to engage with the instruction and to analyze, evaluate, and build knowledge by working with the material and other participants. During this session, learners will engage in collaborative activities that extend beyond memorization and recall. This presentation will focus on the use of collaborative boards to promote brainstorming and peer-to-peer dialogue as part of a lecture. Additionally, we will examine how Nearpod's reporting and analytics features support educators in monitoring student progress in real-time, identifying learning gaps, and adjusting instruction.

By the end of this session, instructors will walk away with practical ideas and real examples for incorporating additional collaborative discussions into their teaching practice. A free version of Nearpod is available for educators, though it has some limitations.