SELECTING A DELIVERY STRATEGY

Introduction

The term "delivery strategy" is overused and often misunderstood. Books have been written about it and often equate it to the term "method." Most undergraduate teaching-training programs even require a course in methods. For the purpose of this article, choosing a delivery strategy will be presented as a choice among the lecture, demonstrations, or discussion. The common nature of these choices do not answer the question How?, but focus on the question, Why? A series of questions is presented to help you make a decision on which delivery method to use.

Choosing a Lecture

The purpose of a lecture is to clarify information to a large group in a short period of time. It is not to convey information! Lectures require a great deal of preparation time and need to be supported by various audio-visuale visualistics. The lecture is a great opportunity for instructors to feed their egos! It is instructor-centered. Handouts, programmed instruction, information handouts, modules; student presentations, guest speakers, films, film strips, and reading assignments are adaptations of lectures.

The following questions should assist you in determining the appropriateness of a lecture.

1. What knowledge, skill, or attitude needs to be learned?
2. How many students need the content?
3. Do all or most of the students need the content now?
4. How much preparation time is available?
5. Are you in command of your nonverbal cues?
6. Can you develop interest in the lecture?
7. Are there appropriate audio-visual support systems?
8. Would a handout work just as well?
9. Can you devise means to ensure that more than one sense is used by students?
10. Are there natural divisions that equate to 20 minutes or less?
11. Would a videotape work just as well?
12. Do your impromptu lectures last 5 minutes or less?
13. Could you provide an outline of important parts of the lecture?
14. What portion of your teaching time do you spend lecturing?
15. Would a text assignment work just as well?
16. Do you summarize regularly in the lecture?
17. Do you pose questions in your lectures?
18. Have you ever listened to or watched one of your lectures?

Choosing a Demonstration

The purpose of the demonstration is to transmit the big picture to a relatively small group of students in a short period of time. Demonstrations usually require a lot of preparation time and must be supported with various audio-visuale visualistics. Demonstrations are particularly useful in teaching skills and are more teacher-centered than student-centered. There are several variations of demonstrations. Projects, peer tutoring, research papers,
practice, field trips, on-the-job training, simulated experiences, and videotapes are adaptations of demonstrations. The following questions should assist you in determining the appropriateness of a demonstration:

1. Does the learner need to see the process?
2. How many students need the content?
3. How many students need the content now?
4. How much preparation time is available?
5. Can you tell and show the content?
6. Can you appeal to other senses?
7. Do you want the students to imitate you?
8. Is there a-v support available?
9. Will the demonstration last more than 20 minutes?
10. Could you use a videotape just as well?
11. Can you ask questions during the demonstration?
12. Can the students take notes?
13. Will there be practice time for the students?
14. Can the student easily identify the steps?
15. Will you permit the students to ask questions?
16. Is there only one right way?
17. Will you support the demonstration with handouts?
18. Have you ever listened to or watched one of your demonstrations?

Choosing a Discussion

The purpose of a discussion is to solicit and involve the student in content transmittal. Discussions are limited to small groups and require considerable time. The discussion method does not require much audio-visual support. This method is particularly useful in an affective area. It promotes understanding and clarification of concepts, ideas, and feelings. There are numerous variations, and the discussion method can vary from teacher-centered to student-centered. Role playing, debate, panel discussion, reviews, supervised study, brainstorming, buzz groups, idea incubation, tests, show-and-tell, worksheets, conferences, and interviews are examples. The following questions should assist you in determining the appropriateness of a discussion:

1. Do you need active involvement from the student?
2. How many students need to be involved?
3. Must you hear everything being said?
4. How much time is available?
5. Is divergent thinking a desirable end?
6. Could you just as well tell them?
7. Can there be more than one right answer?
8. Is there time to clarify differences?
9. How much control do you need?
10. Can you accept the students' views?
11. Can interest be aroused and maintained?
12. Is there time to draw conclusions?
13. Is there time to follow up?
14. What needs to be tested?
15. Is two-way communication necessary?
16. Are checks and balances available to prevent certain students from dominating?
17. Are there means to keep on the topic?