

# Post-It Empower.ed

WINTER 2010

GREAT IDEAS COMPETITION

T.S.C @ UWO



## ~ THINK ~ LEARN ~ GROW ~

### Active learning. Collaborative classroom. Multiple voices. Engaged students.

With the responsibility for learning given to the class, students will mentally and kinesthetically contribute to the educational experience.



Post-It Empower.ed acknowledges the voices of all people in the class, including the more quiet students by giving them time to think and write their responses.

The anonymity within these exercises has the potential to allow students to state ideas and ask questions that otherwise may be held back.

### What ways can Post-It Empower.ed be used in a university classroom?

- Brainstorming new ideas
- Examination reviews
- Discussion of variety of topics in classroom
- Stimulate critical thinking
- See examples on Page 2.

### What is the timing of Post-It exercises:

- Timing depends upon the usage of this group exercise
- Post-It Empower.ed could range from a quick icebreaker at the start of class or use the facilitate and entire class-long examination review
- Instructors keep Post-It questions & ideas for future classroom activities

*"Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."*

*Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

### Resources needed:

- Post-It notes
- Blank paper
- Tape
- Pens or markers



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# Classroom Examples of Post-It Empower.ed

## EXAMPLE 1: BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

**Timing:** 10-20 min

**Set-Up:** Post words, perspectives or quotes on different walls of the room. For example, in course on Leadership you could post: Team, Collaboration, Co-creation. Provide students with 5-10 Post-It notes.

**Instructions:** In silence or with quiet for approximately 3 min, topic-related music in background, ask students to walk around the room, write their responses on Post-Its, and paste them onto the wall. All responses are valued: single words, sentences, pictures.

**Facilitation:** After the 3 minutes, invite students to walk around the room and observe what their fellow students wrote. Hold a discussion. Questions could include: Where there responses that surprised you? What did you notice when you saw the different perspectives? How does the usage of terms you use link to your leadership roles?

## EXAMPLE 2: EXAMINATION REVIEW

**Timing:** 20 min - 50 min

**Set-Up:** Write course name on board

**Instructions:** Give each student in class 3 Post-It notes. For 5 minutes in silence, ask student to write out questions they have about course material. Collect questions and paste them randomly on the board.

**Facilitation:** Students are invited to pick a Post-It note & read it to the class. Instructor guides discussion or response according to needs of question.

## EXAMPLE 3: CLASS DISCUSSION

**Timing:** 20-30 minutes

**Set-up:** Write quote on paper that relates to controversial issue in class. If students can sit in circle, tape on floor in centre. If students in immovable desks, paste on board.

**Instructions:** Distribute Post-Its and invite students to respond to quote with either a question or a statement. Collect then paste randomly on floor or board. Give students 3 minutes to come up with ideas. In silence or music in background.

**Facilitation:** Allow students to volunteer to pick a Post-It they feel compelled to read. Have them read it to group. Encourage responses from others and stimulate further discussion from this idea.



### A Lesson from Louie

Louie is a team. A bird. A metaphor. The idea for Post-It Empower.ed came late one night when 3 team leaders discussed how to lead a Reflection exercise after an emotional, life-altering week of building homes for Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans, Louisiana. We knew that our Alternative Spring Break team had more to teach us than we could speak about ourselves. So, we looked at our tools, saw the Post-It, and gave the power our group "Louie 2" lead the way. It was the most alive teaching experience of my life. I realized how much those students have to give. To teach. To share. To grow. They revived my feeling of hope for teaching the next generation of university students. And, oh ya, that handsome bird is our mascot.

## Collaborative Learning & the University Classroom

Post-it Empower.ed group activities serve to contribute to a positive, engaged learning environment for students. In using Post-It group work, the following values are practiced in an Empower.ed classroom:

**Respect** ~ It is essential that students value the contributions of classmates and engage fully in the learning exercise. Conversely, the instructor must let go of control and trust that learning will derive from the students themselves. Mutual respect and appreciation is possible to instill and maintain during the activity and in the subsequent discussion or debrief.

**Diversity** ~ This anonymous pedagogical approach to discussion encourages a diverse perspectives, alternative ways of thinking, and multiple ways of knowing.

**Collective Intelligence** ~ Students will be asked to think independently while at the same time work together for a shared experience. The exercise reinforces the importance of each individual contribution to the intellectual and creative growth of the whole class.

**Accountability** ~ By placing the responsibility of teaching and learning in the hands and minds of students, the collective experience will encourage students to hold themselves and one another accountable.

