

Intentional Learning: A Process for Learning to Learn in the Accounting Curriculum

4.3 Teaching Roles and Strategies for Learning

A good teacher will be a learner as well, learning about her discipline, students, learning theory and new teaching roles and strategies. Resources are available to offer fresh insight on these matters to even the most experienced and able college teachers. Research shows that using a variety of teaching strategies to engage students in learning enhances both learning and motivation. Faculty who review this research find that learning theory and the experience of others can be helpful as they shape curriculum and courses to include new emphasis on learning to learn.

In considering the teacher's role in helping students learn to learn, it is useful to think of the ultimate role of the teacher as a mentor or coach of learning rather than a professor of knowledge. Of course this approach is not new, but it fits well our desire to focus on learning rather than teaching. The coach or mentor is a colleague who helps individuals enhance their professional performance. Faculty who see themselves as mentors will concentrate on enhancing the performance of the learners in their classroom, rather than on their own performance. Schon's reflective practicum (see Chapter 1) is a good example of teaching as coaching or mentoring.

We now present a series of common teaching roles and strategies and show how they can enhance the attributes of intentional learning. Within the limitations of a short monograph, we could not cover all the possible roles and strategies that could encourage learning. References in our resources list will lead readers to some of the literature in this field. Our choice is to present a limited number of teaching strategies in enough detail so a reader can use these ideas without turning to additional materials. In this discussion we follow a rough progression from the most structured and least interactive strategies to the least structured and most interactive approaches, from the most teacher-dominated to the most student responsibility. This order also echoes the learning process diagram presented in Figure 4.2 and the development of intentional learning attributes. The teaching strategies presented here can all be adapted by individual accounting instructors to their courses and to the particular needs of their students. The goal is to empower students to take responsibility for their learning so they can become independent learners.