

Meauxmentum in the Classroom

‘Small Teaching’ Fosters ‘Large Learning’

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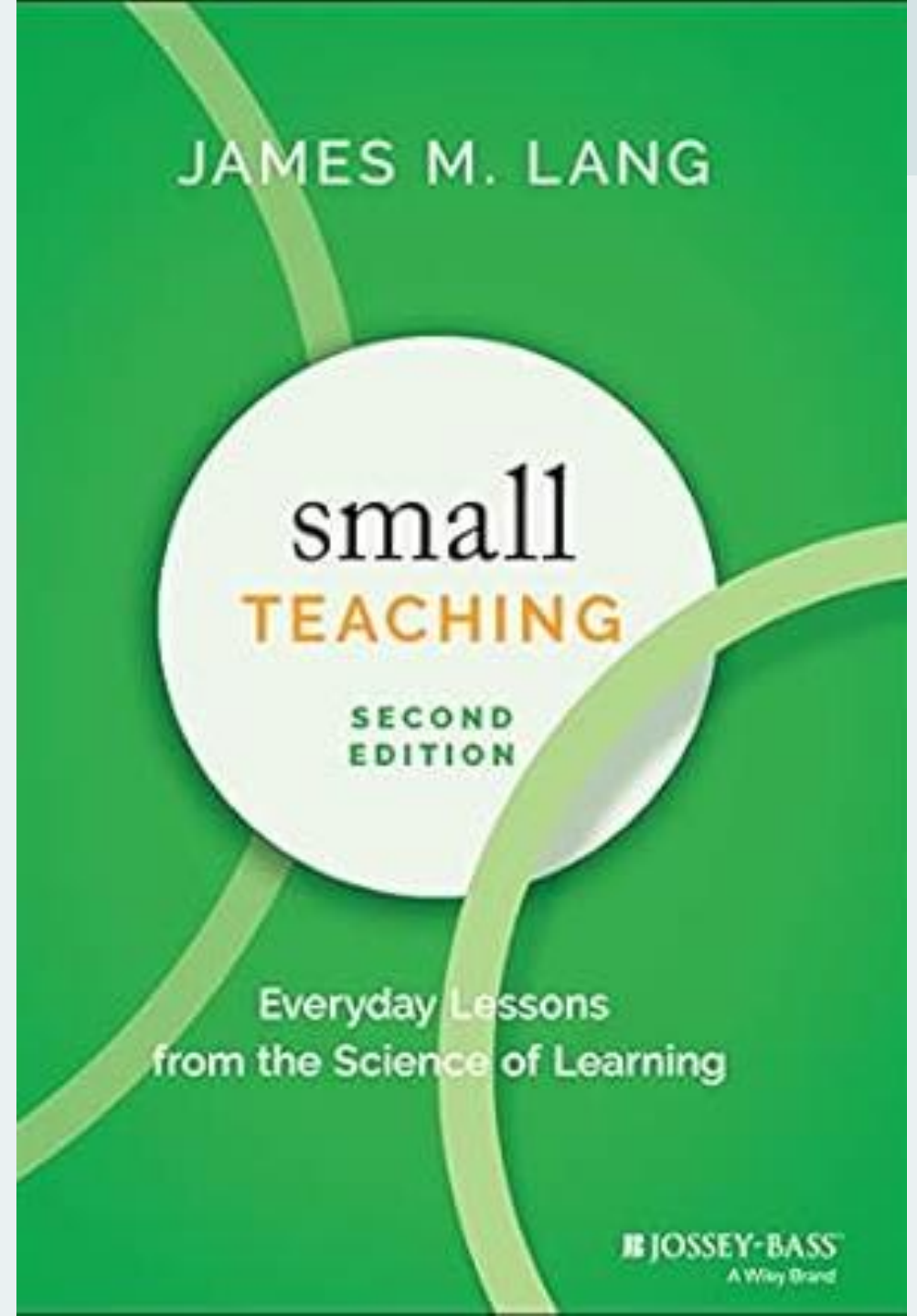
Creative Faculty Engagement, jgalle.com

Purpose

To introduce cognitive exercises using active learning strategies in key moments of class to enhance student learning, all without major course overhaul.

Task

To respond to the items on an inventory of small teaching practices to gain a sense of what is involved in class sessions using the small teaching approach.



Overview

- What is ST? in Lang's words
- Benefits of Using First 5, Last 5, & Hitting Pause
- Types of cognitive exercises
- Examples from Lang and other Classes
- Inventory of Small Teaching Practices
- Discussion and Takeaways

Jim Lang on Small Teaching interventions

- **Brief** (5-15 minute) interventions into individual learning sessions
- **Limited** number of interventions or activities within an entire course
- **Minor** changes to course design, assessment structure, or communication with students

Small Teaching 2nd ed, p. 8

Jim Lang on Small Teaching benefits

- Small teaching activities can provide substantive learning boosts with **minimal investment of faculty time or institutional money.**
- Small teaching activities which foster continuous engagement produce especially **strong results with lower-performing students.**

Lang, keynote 2018

Cognitive activities, active learning, class segments

The WHAT: Lang offers individual chapters on each kind of cognitive activity:

Knowledge: predicting, retrieving, interleaving

Understanding: connecting, practicing, self-explaining

Inspiration: belonging, growth mindset

***The WHEN:** first-5 (useful to retrieve previous matter, to predict outcomes of current/future matter; last-5 (useful to retrieve the day's matter, predict upcoming matter), and Hitting Pause along way(useful to connect, retrieve, practice, reflect).

*Not meant to be restrictive of your choice of times to use brief exercises. It's the kind of exercise that's most important.

Exercise 1: (one minute)

Predicting: based on what you know thus far, what kinds of activities will be included in Small Teaching?





Knowledge

1. **Predicting:** anticipating outcomes before full knowledge
2. **Retrieving:** brief writing activities, quizzes, closing questions, muddiest point
3. **Interleaving:** practice different components of a skill in mixed order, better than 'blocked' practice; so cumulative tests, or a question from previous work,

Engaging student knowledge

- **Predicting:** How do you think this story, experiment, historical event will turn out?

“Asking them to use existing knowledge to struggle with material before we teach it can provide a robust foundation for deeper learning” (20).

- **Retrieving:** Learn facts. Think creatively with facts. Repeat facts.

So some of every assessment can be from previous material. Integrate older with present. Challenge students to remember and integrate repeatedly. Or, begin by inviting them to begin with what they know.

- **Interleaving:** Breaking down a writing genre into parts and spend time practicing the parts in different order. Same way with lab or other skill. Analyze into steps and practice each separately and in different order.



Understanding

1. **Connecting:** joining facts into pattern, a knowledge field; more connections, the easier acquiring new knowledge can become.
2. **Practicing:** itemize skills/tasks for a particular assignment. Give time at end of class to practice each task, as in creating a ppt slide of a particular task/topic
3. **Self-explaining:** Mazur's peer instruction approach. Pair up, one teaches material to partner, reverse roles. Or ask students to create teaching materials

Developing Understanding

- Connecting: Blue book exam booklets become Lang's Commonplace booklets; or Concept Maps function in much same way. The Minute Thesis also provides brief way to connect.

Students gather favorite quotes, observations, lines that they predict will apply to later readings, and at times write in them on assigned topics. Lang urges faculty to create a framework within which students can hang the facts.

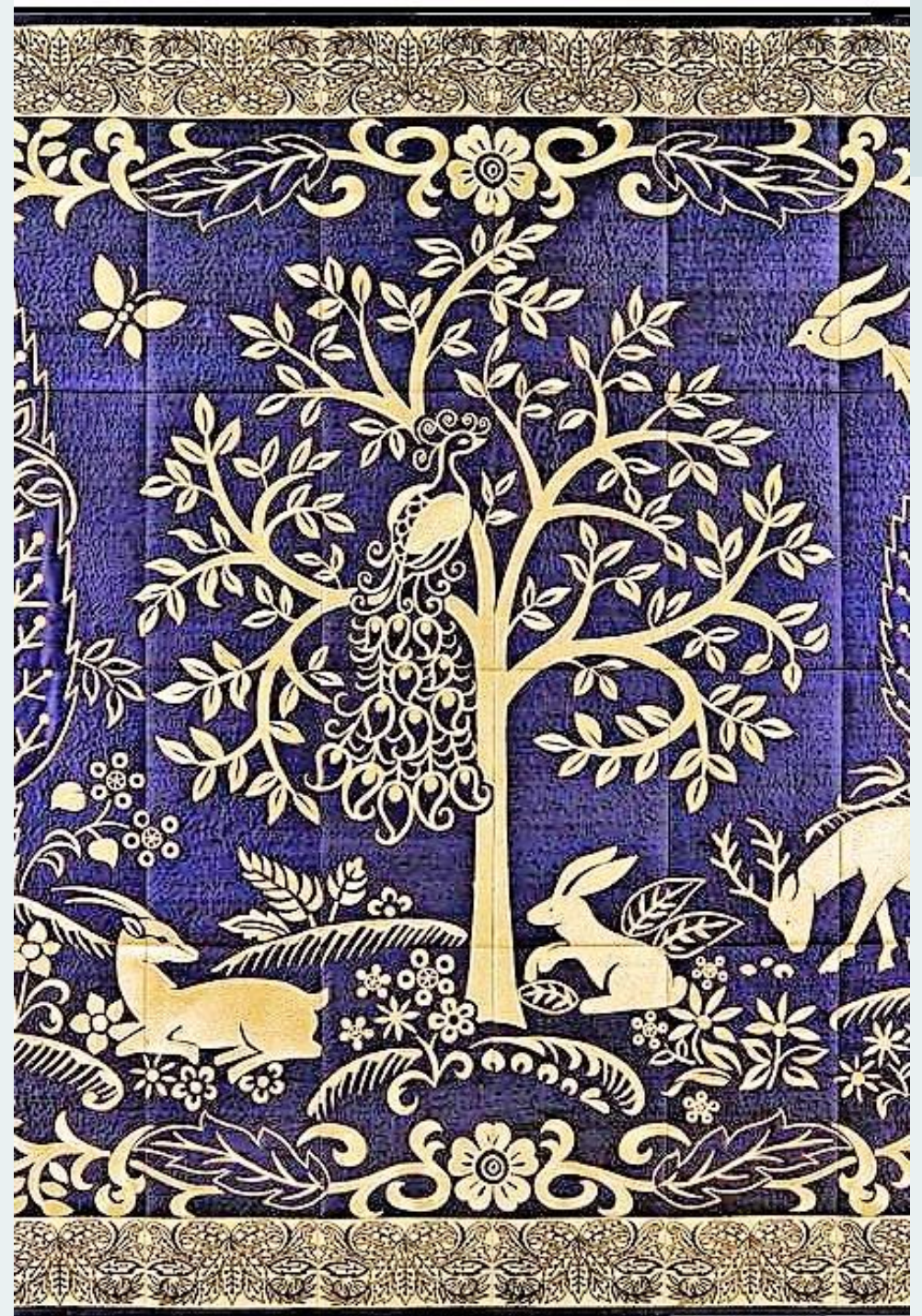
- Practicing: example, **Practicing**: (120) not rote repetition but mindful learning practice; he likes some in-class practice b/c it's a game time venue that calls for more from student. Ex: writing intro pgphs....
- Self-explaining: example, **Explaining** exercises range from student articulating their understanding of a topic; to creating teaching materials for a different audience; to teaching something to a live audience using those materials.

Literary Criticism, the Memoir, or
Period Courses with multiple
books or anthology.

Began each class with a quiz

- Retrieving exercises
- Retrieving to Connecting, or
- Retrieving to Practicing

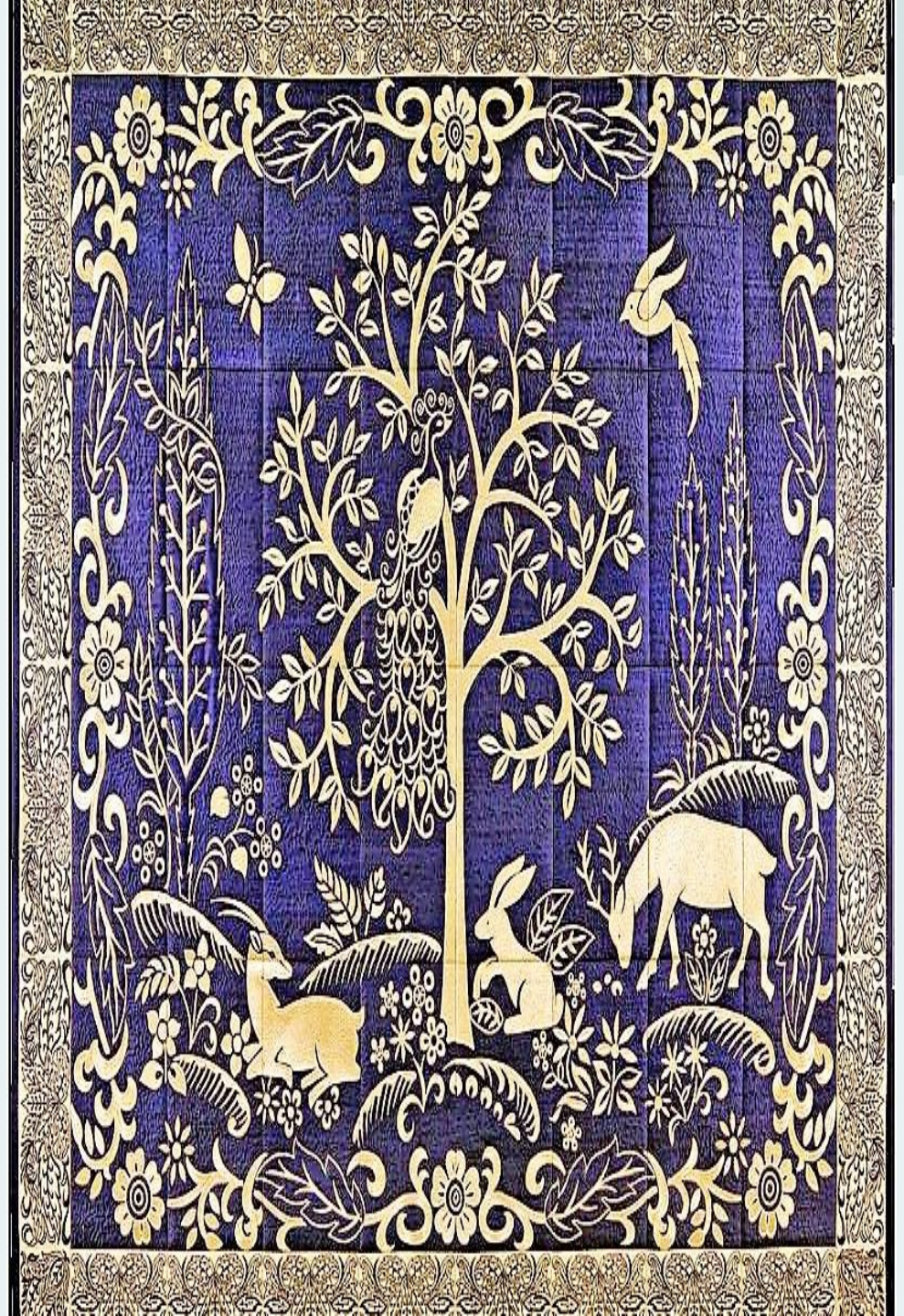
KEY: discerning what to ask of
them



For the same courses, after the quiz, I gave answers and held brief discussion.

Then, after two weeks in, new activities:

- Student led facilitation
- Hitting Pause exercise in pairs
- End with Minute Paper



My class activities in traditional lecture courses:

- ◆ the Quiz
 - ◆ Student facilitation of class discussion
 - ◆ A number of exercises for Hitting Pause
 - ◆ Using the Minute Paper
-
- ◆ Not a class activity: Student Conferencing on multiple drafts of every essay/Research Project

Exercise 2: Think, Pair, Share

What is one instance you have called for students to work at the beginning or ending of a class?

Or, what is one way to utilize the Pause in your classes?

Please give one example in some detail to a colleague at your table.

Which cognitive exercise/activities does this instance involve?



Inspiration

1. Belonging
2. Motivating

Inspiration work

- Share data on mindset and intelligence in the 2019 Yeager study:
- What I communicate to my students in conference and in classes.
- Belonging
- Motivating
- List of Practices that support growth/learning mindsets include naming good work, providing high structure to address the needs of all learners (making lessons and work as multimodal as possible)

Exercise 3

2-5-5 with the Small Teaching Inventory.

Two minutes to read and fill out.

Five minutes to share results with colleagues.

Five minutes report back to larger group.

Guiding question: what item(s) stood out? What is missing? What two will you probably do in the fall?

Note: Each of us should be able to create her own Small Teaching Inventory, or simply add more items to the one we have here.

More Benefits to Faculty Using Small Teaching

1. Does not require beginning from scratch with fully designed course. That's a factor given what faculty carry already. Instead, make a number of small changes, tested them for impact, and assess them before being incorporated regularly into course.
2. Lessens the friction between competing good things: course content and delivery/engagement.
3. Perhaps most importantly, invites individual creativity in designing the interventions that can come from Active Learning, Inclusive strategies, and other pedagogical strategies.

Final tips

- The FLC members can offer great insight for what certain activities will look like in their courses.
- 'Less is more' is a good rule to follow the first time
- Assessments will vary according to importance of the activity.
- Run the FLC like a book club discussion but with the underlying idea to select course changes.
- You have several factors that influence choice of exercise: the segments of each class, the days of the week, and the place you are with your course content.

Takeaways



The Small Teaching approach can be used in classes from the traditional lecture that Lang uses to others like the flipped classroom, gamification, student led facilitation, among others.

The work of the FLC is to explore the cognitive activities and apply specific ones to key moments in the class and across the semester course to exercise specific mental muscles.

The book offers much guidance. Purchasing a copy for each member and scheduling discussion with specific chapters is one way.

Resources

- Angelo, T. A. and Cross, K. P. (1993) Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Barkley, E. F. and Major C. H. (2018) Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Galle, Jeffery and Jo K. Galle, eds. (2023) Putting it All Together: Creating and Scaling Exceptional Learning. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers
- Lang, James M. (2021) Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons From the Science of Learning, 2nd. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Rogers, Satu and Jeff Galle. (2015) How to Make Your Campus a HIP Campus. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Thank
you

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