

effect (<https://arstechnica.com/science/2016/11/revisiting-why-incompetents-think-theyre-awesome/>), where people who don't understand a topic are unable to accurately evaluate how much they knew. Consistent with this, the researchers identified the students with the strongest backgrounds in physics, finding that they tended to be more accurate in assessing what they got out of each class.

Whatever the cause, it's not ideal to have students dislike the most effective method of teaching them. So, the authors suggest that professors who are considering adopting active learning take the time to prepare a little lecture on it. The researchers prepared one that described the active learning process and provided some evidence of its effectiveness. The introduction

acknowledged the evidence described above—namely, that the students might not feel like they were getting as much out of the class.

In part thanks to this short addition to the class, by the end of the semester, 65% of the students reported feeling positive toward active learning. That's still not exactly overwhelming enthusiasm, but it might be enough to keep instructors from giving up on an extremely effective teaching technique.

CITATION:

Louis Deslauriers, Logan S. McCarty, Kelly Miller, Kristina Callaghan, and Greg Kestin, "Measuring actual learning versus feeling of learning in response to being actively engaged in the classroom," in PNAS, Sept. 24, 2019, <https://www.pnas.org/content/116/39/19251>.

WRITING EXERCISE

by Ben Meyers, Liberal arts the Millis Institute, Christian Heritage College Australia

As a writing exercise, I sometimes get students to place their sentences on separate lines and study the length and structure of their sentences. Then I do the same thing with a random page from CS Lewis

One of the questions before them is whether this feeling for posterity (they know well how it is produced) shall be continued or not.

However far they go back, or down, they can find no ground to stand on.

Every motive they try to act on becomes at once petitio.

It is not that they are bad men.

They are not men at all.

Stepping outside the Tao, they have stepped into the void.

Nor are their subjects necessarily unhappy men.

They are not men at all: they are artefacts.

On average, Lewis's sentences are probably 5 or 6x shorter than most other writers. And 50 or 60x more exciting to read.

Ben Meyers is the director of the Millis Institute, Christian Heritage College, Australia This comment was posted on Twitter by @_BenMyers_ on September 11, 2019.