How Do Columbia Students Learn Best?

Melissa A. Wright, Associate Director, Assessment and Evaluation
Amanda M. Jungels, Senior Assistant Director, Faculty Programs and Services

Learning by the Numbers

CTL staff identified 16 descriptive codes, divided into three larger categories: activities or qualities that were driven by the Instructor, the Student, and the Intersection between the two.

Codes from Student Responses

Lecture
Discussion
Small Classes or Groups
Clear Expectations and Course Structure
Feedback from Instructor
Engaging, Passionate, or Interactive Instructor
Supportive or Respectful Space
Challenged by Materials
Real World Application or Relevance
Practice or Repetition
Multiple Access Points
Peer Education
Applied, Active, or Hands-On Learning
Individual Self-Care
Interested in Material and/or Topic or Intrinsic Motivation
Other

The concepts are connected to the real world.

“I learn best when I have previous context, reinforcement from visual and auditory aids, and apply it hands on or through problems.”

“Professors use videos and hands-on activities to teach! Reading and lecture are actually much less effective, I learn best when I can engage with the material.”

Legend:
- Multiple Access Points
- Applied, Active, or Hands-On Learning

Instructor
Student
Intersection

Percent

Data Collection with Dessert

At the 2018 Celebration of Teaching and Learning, CTL staff collected 267 responses from Columbia students to the prompt, “How do you learn best?” Data were collected both as responses to a CTL Tweet and from students walking past a booth set up on College Walk during the Symposium.

Learn More with the CTL

Clear Expectations or Course Structure
Supportive or Respectful Space

The CTL offers . . .
Course Design Workshops and Intensives, Grading for Equity and Inclusion, Teaching Observations, Syllabus Review

“I learn best when I feel I am seen and respected by faculty, in an inclusive environment.”

The CTL offers . . .
Inclusive Teaching Guide, Small Changes to Maximize Equity in the Classroom Workshop, Inclusive Teaching Intensive

Real World Application or Relevance
Applied, Active, or Hands-On Learning

The CTL offers . . .
Engaged Lecturing Workshop, CUIMC Summer Institute, Case-Study Consultations

“I am physically / manually / actively engaged in the activity.”

The CTL offers . . .
Active Learning Institute, Teaching Large Classes Workshop, Team-Based Learning and Ed Tech Consultations