

How instructional activities contribute to students' distraction?

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SUMMARY

EXISTING KNOWLEDGE:

1. **Student Engagement Levels:** The ICAP framework categorizes learning activities into four engagement modes—interactive, constructive, active, and passive—each with varying levels of student involvement. Interactive activities promote the highest engagement.
2. **Distractions in Learning:** Distractions reduce cognitive engagement and hinder learning outcomes. Prior studies often associate distractions with external factors, such as technology, but overlook how instructional methods contribute to distractions.
3. **Active Learning Benefits:** Research emphasizes that active and student-centered learning fosters deeper understanding and engagement compared to traditional passive approaches.

NEW INSIGHTS FROM THIS STUDY:

1. **Passive Activities and Distraction:** Bang et al. found that passive instructional activities, such as listening to lectures or watching demonstrations, significantly correlate with higher distraction levels compared to active or interactive methods.
2. **Distraction Within Active Learning:** The study revealed that even in student-

centered classrooms, certain aspects of active and constructive activities, such as solving ambiguous problems or asking questions, can cause disengagement for some students.

3. **Personalized Distraction Drivers:** Distraction sources vary by student, with individual differences such as learning preferences and group dynamics playing a role in how instructional methods impact focus.

PUTTING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE:

1. **Balance Instructional Modes:** Teachers should design lessons that blend interactive and constructive activities to minimize distractions, ensuring a gradual transition from passive to more engaging tasks.
2. **Tailor Activities to Student Needs:** Recognizing individual learning preferences can help instructors mitigate distraction by adjusting tasks to be clearer and more engaging for all students.
3. **Refine Passive Strategies:** While unavoidable, passive methods like lectures should incorporate frequent pauses, multimedia, or short activities to maintain attention and reduce distraction.

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Reference: Bang, D., Anwar, S., & Ali, S. F. (2023). Relationship between instructional activities and students' distraction. Proceedings of the 2023 ASEE Gulf-Southwest Annual Conference, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.18260/1-2--32738>