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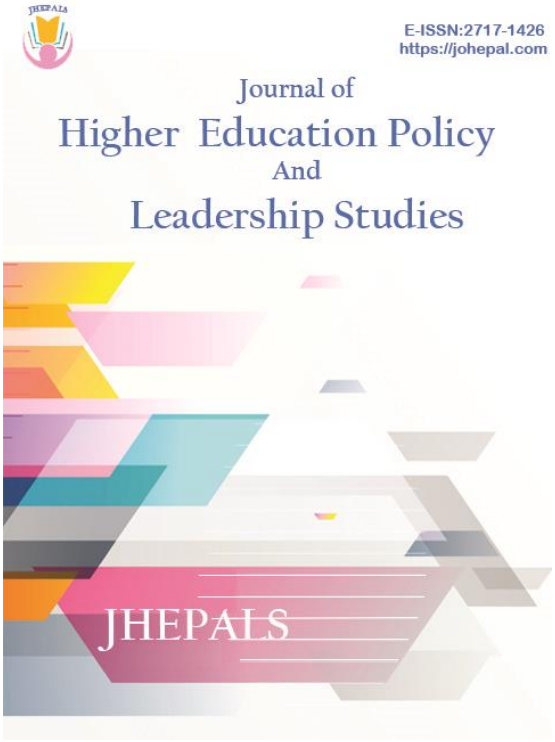

Book Review: **Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty**

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Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty

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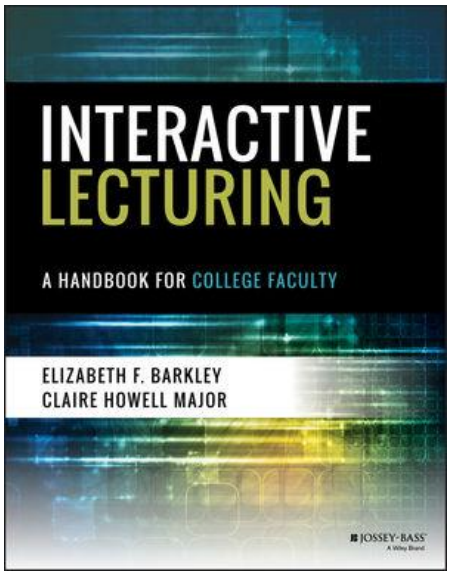

Stephanie B. Cochrane*

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In early 2019, I joined the faculty at Rutgers University School of Health Professions, where I would teach in their undergraduate medical laboratory science program. As a novice educator, I was interested in implementing evidence-based research strategies and active learning techniques into my courses. Given three hours of lecture, twice a week during the summer semester, I knew I wanted to make the best use of my time with my students. For me, the solution was to incorporate active learning strategies into the lecture component of my courses. After doing a simple Amazon search, I came across the book *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty*. I was instantly inspired just from reading the

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description and could not wait to receive my copy in the mail. This book superseded my expectations as it provides practical tips and active learning techniques to boost student engagement, collaboration, reflection, and more.

Traditional lectures have been the predominant format for content delivery since the establishment of the first universities in Western Europe nearly a millennium ago (Zakrajsek, 2018). However, in the early 1990's, a movement in higher education emphasized the push towards learning instead of teaching; thus igniting a debate between teacher-centered practices and learner-centered practices (Harrington & Zakrajsek, 2017). Barkley and Major reframe this issue by explaining that the shift to learner-centered practices does not have to entirely abandon the traditional lecture. Instead, learner-centered practices such as active learning can be integrated into lectures to boost engagement, metacognition, and conceptual understanding.

In a concise and organized manner, Barkley and Major lay the foundation for interactive lecturing and provide the reader with clear, practical, and impactful tips and techniques that can be implemented in any college classroom. Not only do the authors present a conceptual framework for integrating lectures and active learning methods, but they also go a step further to provide best practices and research that supports the utilization of engaging presentations and active learning methods in academia.

In Part 1, Barkley and Major introduce their Interactive Lecturing Model; a model that I have used to structure my Hematology I and II courses with the goal of fostering critical thinking skills and exposing my diverse learners to various teaching strategies. Supported by research, Barkley and Major's Interactive Lecturing Model combines engaging presentations with segments of active learning methods to support meaningful learning experiences where students are active participants from the beginning to the end. The two components of the model work synergistically to produce a "powerful pedagogy" that creates a dynamic learning environment which supports students in activating their prior knowledge, transferring their knowledge to new concepts, and ultimately deepening their learning.

In Part 2, the authors begin discussing the engaging presentations component of their Interactive Lecturing Model by sharing 53 tips throughout 12 chapters that are focused on setting goals, structuring sessions, designing effective audiovisuals, and ways to generate enthusiasm and interest, etc. Each tip is presented in five key sections: focus, format, supports, climate, and communication. For example, in the support section, Chapter 7 describes how to design effective audiovisuals, and Chapter 8 describes how to craft handouts and supplements to support learners during the presentation component of the Interactive Lecturing Model. Additionally, each tip begins with a brief introduction, a key idea, and practical advice for implementation. Barkley and Major even provide tips to assist instructors in preparing for their lectures. Tip 28: Lecture Supply Kit lists several items (i.e., laser pointer, USB drives, cough drops) that college educators should assemble to make their lectures run more smoothly. Barkley and Major explain that educators can demonstrate readiness by rehearsing lectures, dressing for success, and making sure that lecture rooms are book and equipment is functional. Such tips convey a message to students that their

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instructor is well-prepared, professional, and that they care. The tips that Barkley and Major have outlined are practical and especially help guide novice educators as they become acclimated to their new teaching roles.

In Part 3, Barkley and Major provide 32 active learning techniques that focus on preparation, attention, use of information, and the role of assessments in checking for understanding, reflection, and metacognition. Each chapter in Part 3, details active learning techniques that engages the learner at the start of the lesson, during the lesson, and at the conclusion of the lesson. For each active learning technique, authors note the complexity (i.e., low, moderate, high) that is involved during the planning, development, and implementation phases which I found extremely helpful. Additionally, for each technique the authors provide a description and purpose, the preparation, the procedure or steps required to complete the activity, examples, variations to consider, and observations and advice. The level of detail, explanations, and examples that Barkley and Major provide for each technique really speak to its practicality and guide educators in implementing evidence-based strategies into practice.

Overall, *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty* is aimed at college faculty who are interested in bringing life into their lectures by incorporating engaged presentations and periods of active learning. The tips and techniques provided by Barkley and Major are practical, easy to implement, and are suitable for small and large classes. Now into my third year of teaching, I continue to reflect on my teaching strategies and implement techniques outlined by Barkley and Major including lecture maps, content-rich handouts, exit tickets, think-pair-share and lecture previews. Looking to the future, I also hope to incorporate guided notes and Twitter Blasts to generate interest in forthcoming topics. As a practical guide and invaluable resource across an array of academic disciplines, *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty* would be a great addition to the reading list and bookshelves of both novice and veteran educators.

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Book Review

Stephanie B. Cochrane, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM} is a lecturer in the undergraduate medical laboratory science program at Rutgers University School of Health Professions where she primarily teaches Hematology I and II. She has clinical experience working as an American Society for Clinical Pathology board certified medical laboratory scientist. Her research interests include active learning strategies such as retrieval practice and case-study based laboratory simulation. She has presented at the national level on her teaching methods at the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference where she discussed active learning methods, and retrieval and reflection techniques that she has implemented into her courses. Her favorite quote by Brad Henry is "A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love for learning". It is through her teaching methods and strategies that her love for learning is reflected and she hopes to instill this same passion for learning in her students. A long-term professional goal of hers is to assist novice educators in implementing evidence-based teaching strategies into practice.

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