

Talking and questioning improves student outcomes: CPL course

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Ways to increase students' attention spans were shared at the Centre for Professional Learning's Improving Student Learning by Creating a Thinking Classroom course today.

The brain is looking for novelty, presenter Sandra Rohan said. Other tools for increasing student attention spans include incorporating humour, music, movement, choice and games.

Students remember information when they are given an opportunity to talk about it: "You want a talking classroom, a discussing classroom," Ms Rohan said.

Teachers heard that introducing a thinking routine of observing, analysing and questioning into the classroom will cultivate a classroom of thinkers and thus improve student outcomes.

Presenter Jenny Williams said teachers should move away from ping pong questioning, where they asks questions and students answer, to a basketball model, where the question/answer ball is passed around between students and the teacher.

A range of practical strategies for classroom practice were also explored, including collaborative group work, teaching vocabulary that allows students to engage in rigorous conversation, problem solving and inquiry.

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