

Mock Conferences: Creating Student Engagement

Daniel Johnson, djjohnson@arizona.edu

Traditional methods of organizing courses place the professor at the center. Active learning approaches, which by contrast place the student at the center, result in better student learning but can be difficult to implement. But where there's a will, there's a way, and good ideas are often a handy starting point. One useful active learning strategy is tasking students with conducting their own research in order to become "experts" on a topic and then presenting with their newfound expertise. While this can take place relatively informally in class, it can also be done in a more formal context as a "mock conference."

This session will focus on two mock conferences that were conducted as a part of regular class sessions in two different courses at the University of Arizona CVM. The presentation will outline the structure and requirements of the mock conferences and then discuss how they went. It will conclude with lessons learned as well as benefits and how they connect to best practices in education.