

HOW FINE IS INNOVATIVE TEACHING? FADS AND FALLACIES OF 'CUTTING EDGE' INSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

One of the more pronounced goals of post-secondary educators is to further students' critical thinking and decision-making skills. Often mentioned in the pursuit of this goal is the need for innovative teaching. This desire is also commonly expressed as valuation criteria when faculty seek academic promotion and apply for teaching awards. Somewhat ironically, however, many innovative teaching techniques that are taking for granted would not stand up to the scrutiny of the tenets of critical thinking; some 'innovations' have not been empirically tested, while others have been proven to be ineffective. In this research, the merits of innovative teaching will be discussed by highlighting examples ranging from the bizarre to the beneficial. By clearly defining innovation and highlighting the evidence-based approach to innovation, pedagogical strategies for instructors will be provided that have clear and proven teaching effectiveness merit. While this research is entrenched in the decision sciences—business and psychology—it provides generic findings of use across academic subjects.

Keywords: innovation, teaching resources, evidence-based pedagogy