

STEVEN HALL: So there are a couple challenges that you need to think about when you're using this approach. One is it's important to explain to the students what's going on. If you just start doing this and say, this is what we're going to do, and don't tell the students why you're going to do it, that's problematic. I think it's important to think of the students as partners. Explain what's going on, they're much more likely to buy into it and maybe get used to the new approach. One of the things I do is I present some data, because it's MIT and students are persuaded by data. And what the data says is that generally the more active a learning exercise, the more that students learn. And there's some really good data in the literature that shows that, so I explain to students that the reason I'm doing this is to increase their level of understanding, especially at the conceptual level as opposed to the analytic level of just doing a problem using, the equations.

STUDENT: I've never had a recitation like this before. Actually working on problems with everybody else and kind of going through and struggling through it, but eventually understanding a lot better what was done in lecture through, I guess, a more hands on approach.

STEVEN HALL: Do the students like this? Well, I have a little bit of feedback. I do think that, initially, they're apprehensive. They're not used to being so exposed in the classroom. They can hide, usually. If they don't want to answer a question, they don't raise their hand. But in a situation like this, everyone's answer is visible. So initially, I do think they are a little bit uncomfortable. I think they get comfortable very quickly and get used to it. At the end of the day, at the end of the class when they evaluate it, I've found that students really like this approach, that they like this sort of recitation much more than conventional recitations, and often comment about that in the course evaluation. So even though there might be a little bit of initial reluctance, I think most students would really like this approach.