

Five Minutes for Fifty Dollars

BYU, Office of General Education | May 9, 2016
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Article:

The idea of "Five Minutes for Fifty Dollars" stems from an article by James M. Lang in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Lang compares the opening sentences of books and newspapers to the first five minutes of class. According to Lang, the beginning sentences, or minutes, will make readers, or students, decide if they want to continue reading, or learning. (For the full article, go to:

<http://chronicle.com/article/Small-Changes-in-Teaching-The/234869>)

Presenters

For the 2016 GE Academy, multiple instructors submitted a wide variety of ideas on what they do in the first five minutes of class. All ideas are listed below. Those marked with an asterisk are ones that presented in the May 2016 GE Academy.

Name	College	Department	Suggested Idea:
Joyce Adams	FHSS		I would need to think about this more deeply, but here are some ideas I might share:\pair and share\one minute essay\attention-getting slide\play devil's advocate \ask a question & wait for responses
Michael Arts	HUM	Philosophy	I start with a prayer. I ask for questions; almost any kind of question, to find out what is on the students' mind, even when the questions are outside of the class material. I give a quick overview of last class and explain the philosophical significance of what was discussed in class so students can see why we studied what we did.
Jay Buckley	FHSS	History	I would present 2 or 3 brief examples from my History 220 class that discuss examples of "interest hooks" to draw students in or "relevance hooks" to show how the day's topic applies to us now.
Gideon Burton	HUM	English	I would be happy to share how I have students begin class by turning in an index card upon which they have written a representative quotation from the reading and a discussion question that ties the reading into one of the set themes / learning outcomes for that unit (usually an historical period). Or, I can share how I use online discussion from either Digital Dialog or a class blog as a starting point for the day's in-class discussion.
John Colton	PMS	Physics and Astronomy	I start with a prayer using an online sign-up sheet for volunteers, then announcements which can include upcoming important dates. Then I go over their responses to the online voting on the question of "Which of the problems from last night's HW assignment would you most like me to discuss in class today?" (deadline just before class) and I

			spend several minutes going over the homework problem that received that most votes. Some semesters I also read out loud extra credit paragraphs students have submitted, describing how they have noticed physics at work in the world around them.
Julie Damron	HUM	Asian and Near Eastern Languages	I always have students in my Korean classes start with a Korean conversation, in pairs, related to the grammar that I will teach that day or I have them sing a Korean song that contains the grammar point for that day and have them discuss among themselves what grammar point they see over and over in the song and what the meaning must be and how to use it.
Eric Eliason	HUM	English	I often ask for folklore experiences students have had where they heard a joke, legends, or witnessed folk-art in the making.
Aundrea Frahm*	FAC	Art	I would share how I start class in multiple ways to keep students engaged. I play music and we draw all together on the same butcher board paper. We start off with a fun art making activity, once a week we start with a spiritual thought. \\Will there be a projector provided to show images? How many people will I be presenting to? Will they be at tables or in an auditorium setting?
Kristine Frederickson	REL	Church History and Doctrine	We begin with a prayer. I introduce the material that will be covered that day (that they are to have already read and become familiar with). I will provide background and context on the material we will be covering. I will then do one of a few things:\\- Introduce students who have prepared in advance, who will give a group presentation on individuals who are mentioned in the sections, or material we will be discussing that day.\\- Ask students to share any questions they have about the material, or insights, or important parts they want discussed--and open the discussion to the class.\\- Pose, or write on the blackboard, a question for them to respond to related to the lecture material, either in writing and/or in a class discussion.\\- Cite a quotation or particular verses from that day's reading and put them in groups to discuss and report back to class. \\-Articulate the concepts and learning goals related to that day's teaching.
Charles Graham	EDU	Instructional Psychology and Technology	I am already giving a presentation on blended learning.
Cynthia L. Hallen	HUM	Linguistics and English Language	We sing a hymn or have sweet prayers,\\Discuss the reading work in pairs.
E. Jeffrey Hill	FHSS	Family Life	I do think, pair, and share. The students thinks about a question related to the day's topic, pair with another

			student, and share their thoughts. This produces quite a bit of loud enthusiasm which almost raises the roof!
Jane Hinckley	HUM	Comparatives Arts and Letters	I either start class with a short quiz (a review slide from last class and a new slide that demonstrates what the students have read for the current class [Lego recreations are often used]) or a question that deals with the "big idea" of the class period (e.g. "have any of you had to follow your plan B after plan A had failed? How has this affected your life?" then we talk about Filippo Brunelleschi's Plan A [win the baptistery door competition - he didn't win] and how Plan B changed the course of Western Art [went to Rome, which resulted in his invention/rediscovery of single-point perspective]).
Norah Hunter	LS	Plant and Wildlife Sciences	It is vital to get their eyes, ears, and attention up front to me, and not to their personal electronics. I've been teaching for 34 years at BYU and in the last 5-10 years, the focus of the students' attention has shifted from the teacher and course subject to what is on their phones and other electronics. In my floral and plant classes, the best method to get the attention of the entire class (and not just to those who are on the front 3 rows) is to have tangible visual aids at the front of the classroom and to speak loudly with excitement and show them some "magic" right before their own eyes. Another successful method of getting the attention of the entire class is to tell a great story from my own experience that has to do with the topic of discussion for the day. I still have to yell out... "Get off your phones and watch/listen to this...". Then I continue demonstrating or story-telling as I talk about the design principal, the historic beginnings, or the life application, etc. to whatever I am demonstrating with the flowers or plants. It takes planning, extra thought and time, and smart recycling of supplies to care about getting the attention of college students in today's world. When I look out into the large lecture halls of my classes, I would guess that most the time students are "checking" their phones, either texting or engaging in some form of social media which could include twitter, Instagram, Facebook, snapchat, vine, vimeo, etc. In today's world, people are connected instantly through the web/internet and social media. It seems young people often feel their self-worth depends on how many likes or followers they have on social media. This would drive them to constantly be checking their phones to be updated with funny, fun, and odd posts. Many students are overly obsessed with their phones and electronics and not as interested and engaged in the live instruction and opportunities of learning and education in the traditional classroom. It is definitely a challenge to keep the attention of students. Throughout my

			<p>lectures, I will have volunteers come up to the front and participate in drawing something on the board or telling an experience or showing something they found on the internet (that has to do with the topic of discussion, and pre-approved). This way, they have been thinking about the topic, searching out that topic on their own (in addition to reading the text or coming to class) and can share with the class what they have found. This increases the social relationships within class, as well as outside of class. At the end of class, I often will have one or several winner/s of the item/s I have demonstrated during class time. Winners are determined in various ways. Students want to win, so they seem to be more engaged throughout the class.</p>
Kathryn Isaak*	HUM	Comparatives Arts and Letters	<p>I believe in the power of storytelling. In my History of Civ. courses, we paint a grand picture of the way societies and values change over time, but we create that picture pixel by pixel, through the stories of specific people, places, and events. Sometimes I open class by telling a compelling story from the period we are studying. I try to put students in the moment; to help them, as much as possible, live for a moment in history--as a worshiper in St. Peter's during Holy Week in Counter-Reformation Rome, as a citizen of ancient Constantinople walking through the doors of the Hagia Sofia just after its completion, or as a member of the French court attending to Marie Antoinette as she is dressed for the day. I deliberately select stories that provoke class discussion about engaging and essential ideas: the role art plays in religion, the power architecture has to shape our reality, the way strong rulers create their own propaganda. In class evaluations, students inevitably mention loving and remembering the stories we discussed in class. Hopefully these stories and the big ideas they represent will stay in students' minds long after specific dates and terms have faded. Storytelling has the power to connect us to our history, and connect us to each other as human beings who are observers of and participants in history. Storytelling brings vast historical movements down to a personal level, and lets students know the power they have to shape their own histories. I would love to share one of these stories with my colleagues at the G. E. Academy to try to demonstrate the ability a powerful story has to provoke deep thinking and deep discussions in our classrooms.</p>
Brian Jackson	HUM	English	<p>I have students do a "rush write." I ask them a compelling question or present them with a controversy and ask them to write, freely and without the Mind's Editor on task, about that topic. Then I ask students to share what they wrote with someone next to you. The process is called "write-pair-</p>

			share," and it's a great way to get the class thinking, writing, and talking.
Lisa Johnson	HUM	English	I begin each class with prayer. Then I read a student's writing from Digital Dialog to read out loud (or have the students read). We usually read several students' writings each class period. I would talk about how to use Digital Dialog (from Learning Suite) as an online writing journal with prompts to begin class discussion and how using students' writing in class helps students join the conversation.
Nieves Knapp	HUM	Spanish and Portuguese	This is what I do in SPAN 321, a course geared to return missionaries. It is their first class after their mission.\We always begin class with a hymn and a prayer (students are responsible for this). Then we go over the objectives and content of the class for the day. I ask for the input of the students as I present what we will be covering in class, so sometimes I add or remove elements from my lesson plan, or dedicate more or less time to one aspect, depending on what students propose.
James Krause	HUM	Spanish and Portuguese	IDEA 1: In my Portuguese language class for returned missionaries, the students actually take turns conducting the opening of class each day. We follow "BOCA," which stands for boas-vindas (welcome), oraçãõ (prayer), cançãõ (song [or in this case a hymn]), and anúncios (announcements). This helps students take ownership of their classroom experience. I also find it helps them transition from missionary to civilian life. \\\nIDEA 2: In my literature courses, I frequently use "rush-writes," which is something I learned in the university writing seminars. We'll start class with a prayer and then I'll ask students to take 90-120 second to respond to a brief writing prompt. They don't turn in their answers, but we use them to get our discussion going. I find this particularly helpful in engaging more introverted students. They have a chance to collect their thoughts and come up with a comment instead of being forced to participate on the spot.
Matthew Linford	PMS	Chemistry and Biochemistry	Gosh, I'm not sure what to say...\\For some time I appear to have been the favorite Chem 106 teacher in our department. Many hundreds of students take this class each year from us. Some time before a semester begins, my classes will often be entirely full with as many students on the wait list as can be in the class. I can tell you what I do in class, but I'm not sure I do anything special in the first five minutes.
Barbara Lockhart	LS	Exercise Sciences	Exciting results we are seeing in ExSc 221 Science of Wellness (social sciences GE)
Mike MacKay	REL	Church History and Doctrine	I would likely use a short portion of one of more interesting lectures, perhaps about the translation of the Book of

			Mormon or polygamy. The translation lecture is centered on a historically accurate painting of the translation with a seer stone and Joseph Smith translating with a hat to get them thinking about the topic and its significant. The polygamy lecture is less visual, but interesting nonetheless.
Jennifer Nielson*	PMS	Chemistry and Biochemistry	When beginning a new concept, I start class with a chemical demonstration in which the students have to predict what they think will happen. For example, if it is gas laws, then I might have a bell jar chamber with a connecting pump and marshmallow peeps (the huge minion peeps are great!) I describe to the students what they are looking at, what I am going to do (turn on the pump and create a vacuum inside), and ask them what they think they will see and what is happening to the molecules? I have them talk to their neighbor after the experiment about what they observed and what they think it means. This way they are already applying their previous knowledge to the experiment and we can add to or correct their understanding. Chemistry should help them comprehend their world.
Daniel Olsen	FHSS	Geography	Brain teasers, questions related to class, sometimes a low-stakes writing assignment
Christopher Oscarson*	HUM	Comparatives Arts and Letters	In one of my media studies classes, opening with a clip (especially from a film we have watched together) and a quick focused speed write serves to both give me a sense of what the students have understood going into our discussion and also to prime the pump for our discussion to follow.
Joseph Parry	UE	Honors	I start with a somewhat focused question, but then introduce a big (Great) question or two that lies behind that more focused question and gives the focused question its fundamental meaning and significance. Ex: I introduce the question: "Did Mormons in Nazi Germany act differently than Germans of other faith traditions?" After saying a few things about the large churches--Catholics and Lutherans--and smaller churches, I then pose the question: "To what extent does, or should, our faith make a difference in our social, economic, and political behavior on an individual level and on a communal level?"
Zina Petersen	HUM	English	How I begin my English 236 (Masterpieces in English Literature) with a description of King Arthur as the center of a cyclone of rumor, legend, mythology, history, "History," hopes, wishing, and possibly, a little truth. It involves Grapes, drawing on the desks, and suspension of disbelief. As does Arthur.
Andrew Reed	REL	Church History and Doctrine	I like to start my classes off with a short writing prompt based on our course material (either for the day, based on a short video clip that gets students thinking, or course

			material previously covered). This helps the class members get their minds working on a short, relatively easy task that naturally leads into our lecture/discussion for the day. I also like to have individual students share a couple of thoughts or questions they had from the previous lecture.
Jill Rudy	HUM	English	I have done what I call Golden Tickets. They are yellow index cards that students keep on a binder ring throughout the semester. Folklore students write about a tradition they noticed in context and/or give a brief reading log entry with a quotation, comment, and question. Writing students do a sentence combining activity. They turn them in at the end of class, and I review them before the next class.
Jacob Rugh*	FHSS	Sociology	I would discuss how I draw in students in the first 5 minutes when I teach about immigration (demographics, social construction, policy dimensions, and LDS Church position) in SOC 111 & SOC 113, two GE courses that I teach.
Taunalyn Rutherford	REL	Church History and Doctrine	When teaching World Religions I like to begin my study of Jainism by having my students come to class having read the narrative of a Jain nun and her extreme adherence to Jain religious practices. I begin class by posting an observation of one of the foremost Western scholars of Jainism. The quote challenges Western/Christian assumptions which he sees in his students. He says his students spirituality is "characterized by a degree of narcissism: that God loves me, that Jesus died for my sins, that I am unique and special and therefore divinely entitled to all the material comforts with which American society is "blessed." Additionally he sees a repulsion to "the idea that the life of an insect might be every bit as valuable as their own." I ask students to think about how Jainism challenges not only Western/Christian but also LDS and their own values and assumptions. Then we have a discussion. My goal is to open a dialogue between my students and this Jain scholar as well as open their minds to a dialogue between Jain and LDS values. To encourage deeper thinking I have them imagine they had been born to a Jain family in India. After meeting with the missionaries they decide to become a Latter-day Saint. Having been taught that converts should "bring all that is good from their previous tradition," I ask, "What does your 'Jain-informed' LDS discipleship look like?" "Do the Jain values you retain make you an even better Latter-day Saint?" "If so how?" We have an initial discussion which prepares them to look more closely at the Jain tradition and then I tell them we will revisit the question at the end of class. This prepares them to identify and understand Jain values and culture and look for what they can learn from this very different religious tradition.

Avram Shannon	REL	Ancient Scripture	In my classes, the first five minutes are dedicated to the student's questions about the reading. This gives the students an opportunity to reflect on what they have read for the day, and to direct the first part of the class. Since I teach in Ancient Scripture, I am already teaching a topic that the majority of students are engaged with. Letting them ask questions gives them a chance to share their own experiences and understanding of the texts and scriptures. It also helps me to gauge their understanding of the reading, and to nuance the day's lesson accordingly.
Delys Snyder	HUM	English	For Women's Studies 222: I grab a free NYT from the pile at the Kennedy Center on the way to class, and I ask the student who has spoken the least during the semester to find an article about women or gender in the newspaper and share it with us. About 10 minutes into class, the student generally raises her/his hand and reports on the article. Often that same student will go on to voluntarily contribute to the class discussion for the day. We get good participation from the individual students, and they get used to speaking up in a class that is entirely based on discussion.
Ryan Stewart*	LS	Plant and Wildlife Sciences	To help my students become more aware and observant of the world around them, I share an image on the projector screen of an image that is connected in some way to plant biology. I give them a minute or two to formulate at least two hypotheses of what they see in the image. They are then invited to share their hypotheses with another student. After two minutes of discussion, I then open it up to the entire class to share their thoughts.
James Swensen	HUM	Comparatives Arts and Letters	The first thing I do in the first 5 minutes is take a deep breath and smile. We go over any news (deadlines, current events, announcements, etc.) and then I give a few overarching themes for the day. We then dig in.