

## Transparency:

Why telling students “WHY” makes new teaching approaches more successful

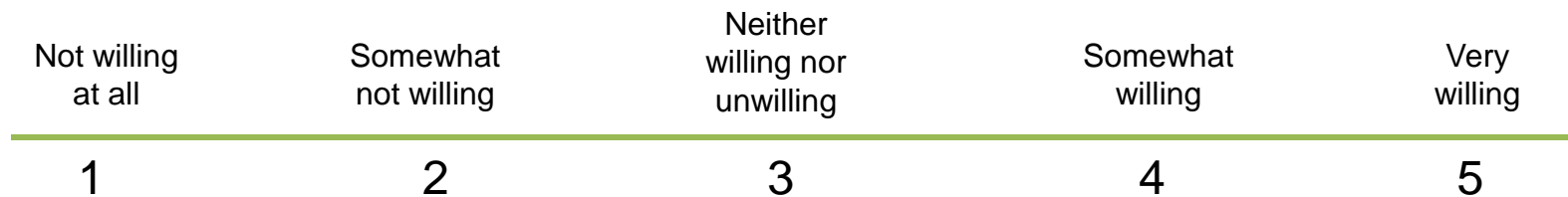
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# How willing are you to try a significantly different teaching strategy in your class(es)?



If you answered 1, 2 or 3, what factors discourage you from trying new strategies?

Have you ever tried something new in class only to abandon the idea because of negative student feedback?

- A. Yup... multiple times!
- B. Yes, but I only made that mistake once
- C. Nope.

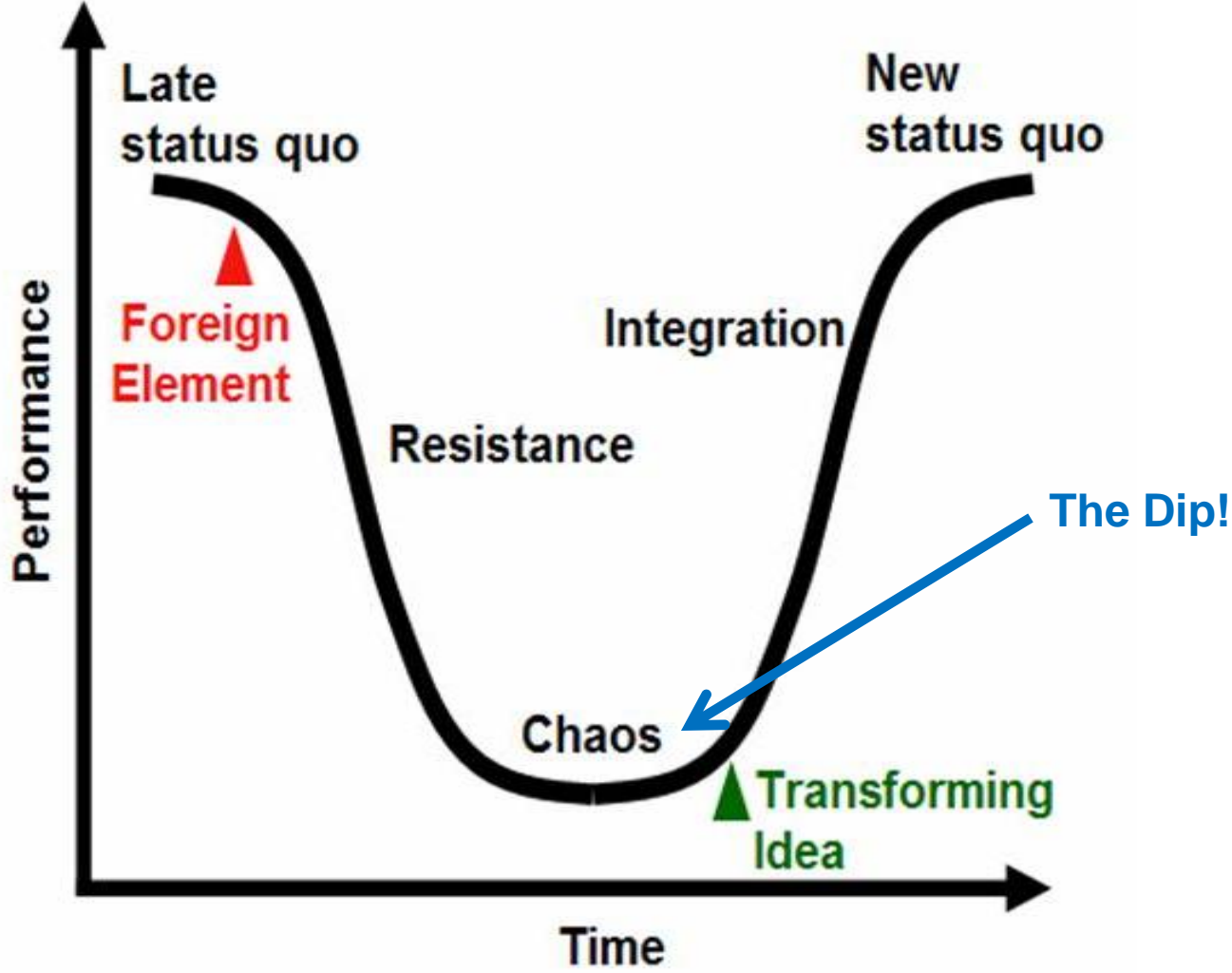
Think about a time when you were asked to change how you did something after doing things one way for a long time...

- What was your initial reaction?
  - Think quietly for 30 seconds
- Now share with someone
- Discuss



**“What fits your busy schedule better, exercising one hour a day or being dead 24 hours a day?”**

# A little bit about adoption of an innovation



Virginia Satir

# Now think about your students...

- Think about something you might implement in the next year in your class(es)
  - How can you help students get through the dip?
  - Talk to a partner
  - Discuss





Transparency is key

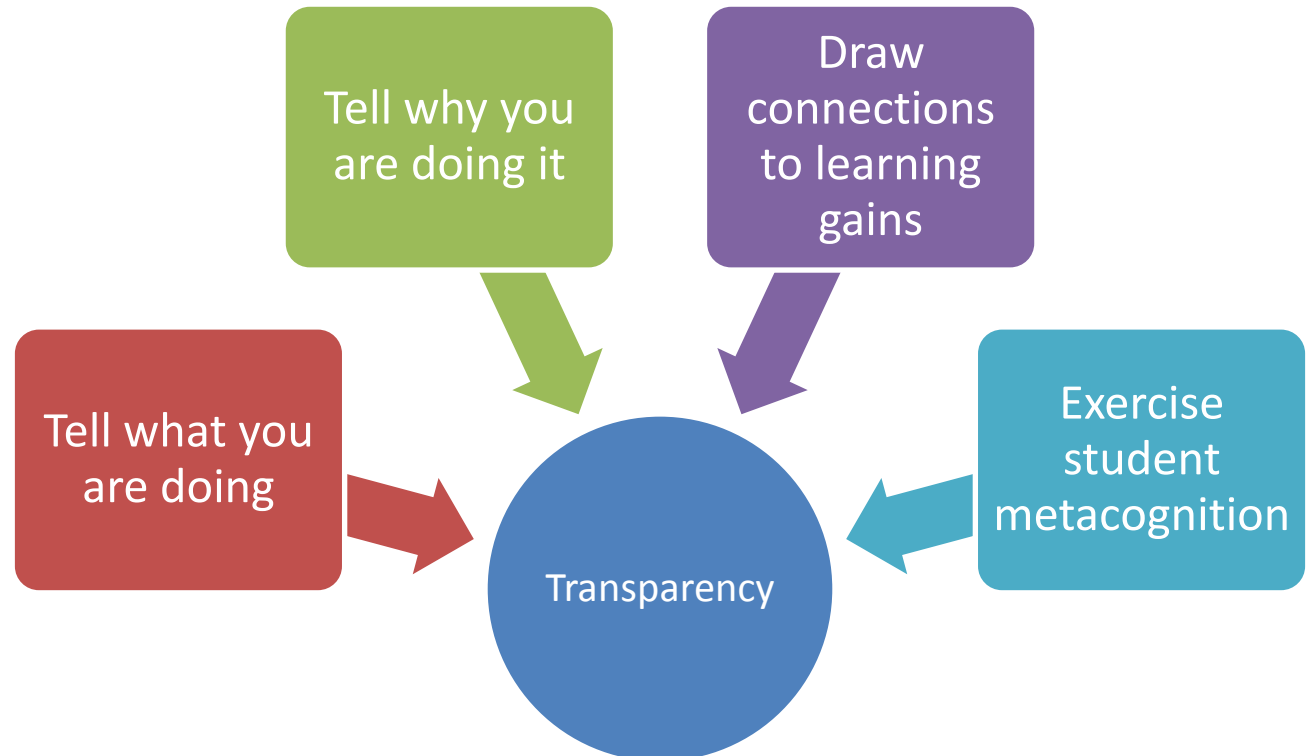
# Have you learned about transparency before?

- A. Yes... and I am confident I know what it is all about
- B. I've heard of it, but I'm not really sure what it is
- C. Not really...



# What is transparency?

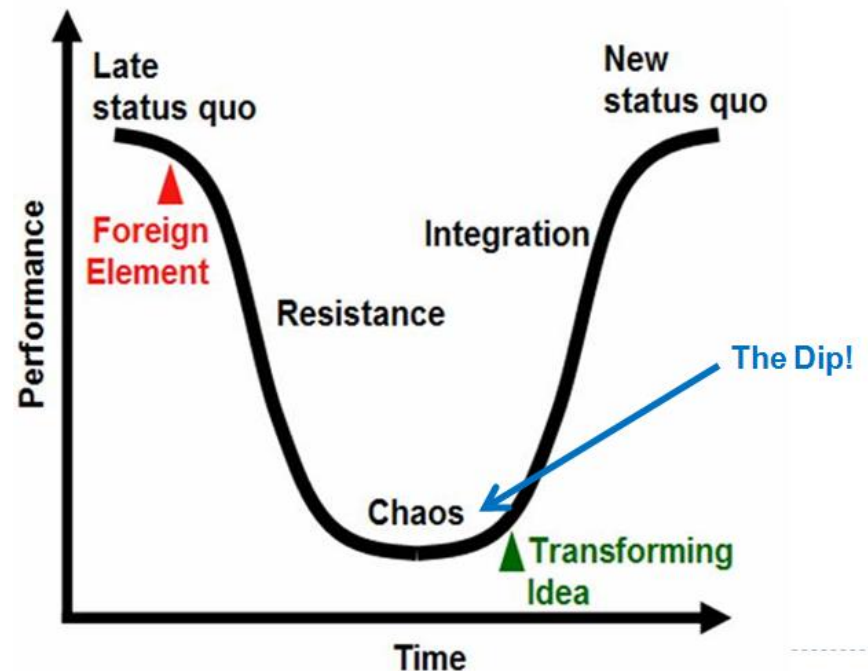
- FIRST: Know **why** you are doing what you're doing!
- Then:



# Some important points about transparency

- Tell students WHAT and WHY
  - Once is **NOT** enough!
  - Tell them to expect the dip

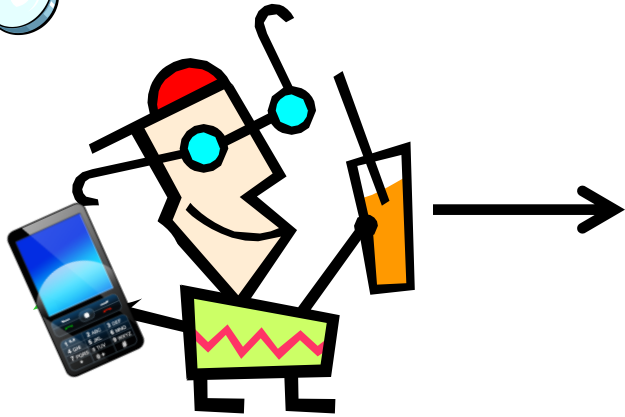
- Address student:
  - Misconceptions
  - Expectations
  - Concerns



# For example....

- No lectures during class
  - A/V lectures online (or reading) before class
  - **Students** held responsible for **first exposure** to the content
- In-class: Hold students accountable
  - Tuesday online homework
  - Thursday in-class quiz
  - Daily clicker questions
  - Group activities
- Here's what I show students to explain WHY I do what I do:

# Traditional Class Format



Preparation for class



In-class lecture: **First Exposure**



Worksheets/review =  
confusion & frustration

Unsuccessful exam  
preparation



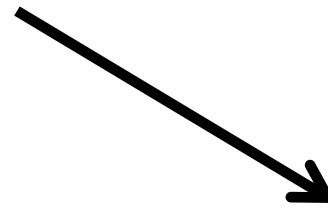
# Our class format



Preparation for class: **First Exposure**



Confusion and questions



In class: Exploration, discussion, group work and exam preparation



Better comprehension and exam performance

## Reality Check:

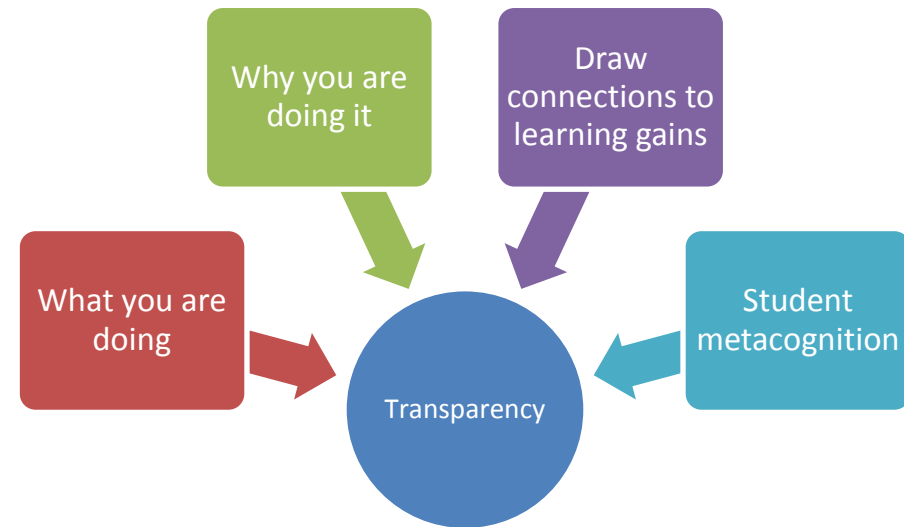
How many of you thought: “Yeah, right. There’s no way she gets students to learn the information before class”?

- A. That’s definitely what I was thinking.
- B. I wondered about that a little bit.
- C. Didn’t really cross my mind.

Metacognition...

# Why did I just stop and ask you a question?

- Talk to a partner
- Debrief
- Research on attention span
- Did you notice I just told you **WHY** I was doing **WHAT** I was doing?



# Do students really interact with the material before they come to class?

- N = 141
- Weekly homework (due before **Tuesday** class):
  - Average homework assignments completed: **90.8%**
  - Average grade: **77.3%**
- Weekly in-class quiz (during **Thursday** class):
  - Average **individual** grade: **55.7%**
  - Average **group** grade: **86.4%**
  - Average **overall** quiz grade (indiv + grp): **71.1%**
- Compare to **average exam score** (2 exams): **67.8%**

# What is transparency again?

- Tell students WHAT and WHY
  - Once is **NOT** enough!
  - Tell them to expect the dip
- Address student:
  - Misconceptions
  - Expectations
  - Concerns

# Tell students why/what

- Day 1: **Introduce**

- Class format
- Change curve and “the dip”



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- Weeks 1-4: **Remind**

- Where are you (change curve)?
- Minute paper/reflection
  - How’s it going?
  - Why did Dr. Kerry make me discuss \_\_\_\_\_ with a partner instead of just telling me the information/answer?
  - What could you try to do differently to be successful in this class?
  - What did you learn today in your group discussion?



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- Weeks 5-15: **Reinforce**

- Ask: Where are you on the dip?
- Reinforce at least once about class format



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# What is transparency again?

- Tell the students WHY you are doing what you are doing
  - Once is NOT enough
  - Process v. event
- Address student:
  - Misconceptions
  - Expectations
  - Concerns

# Address student misconceptions, expectations, concerns

- Clearly outline of what will happen
  - Study time per credit hour
  - Time management planner
- Educate students—most lack metacognitive skills
  - “**Knowledge is rumor until it is in the muscle.**”
  - Sports analogy
  - How many steps was that question?
  - Why did Dr. Kerry have me draw a picture/discuss with a partner, etc.?
- Syllabus exploration



# Address student misconceptions, expectations, concerns

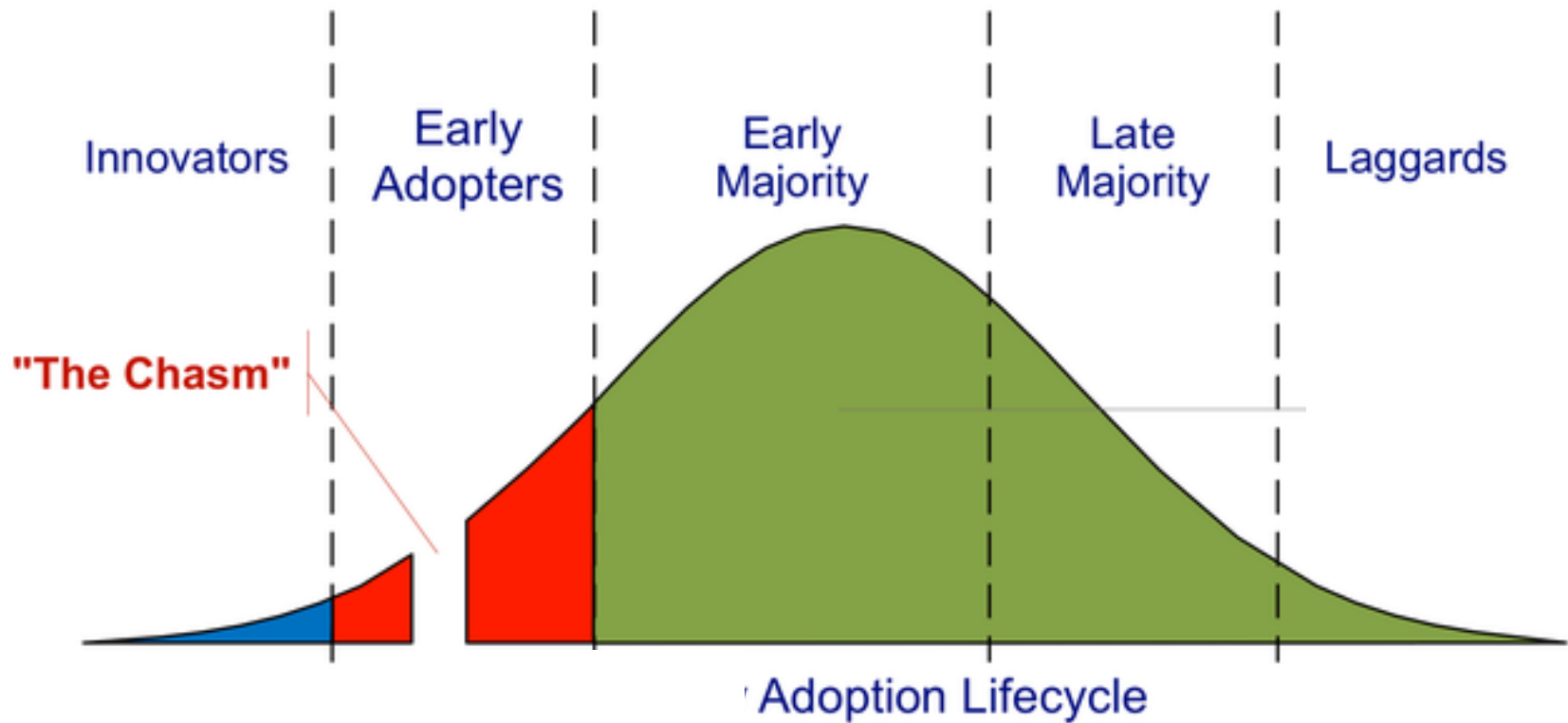


Repetition, repetition, repetition

- Length of time to adopt a change
- Remember: change is a **process**



Even after transparency throughout the semester, can you guess some of the students' responses?



# What they are really saying...

- Silverthorn:
  - What the students are really saying is **“You’ve changed the rules!”**
    - (2006, p. 138)



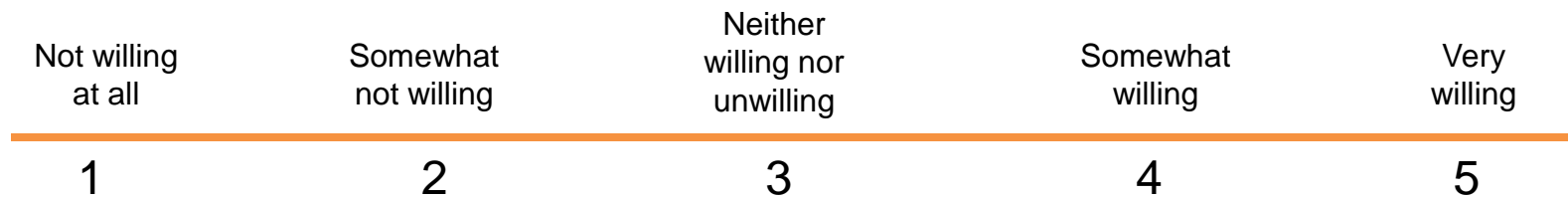
# Don't be discouraged...

- DON'T YOU DARE CHANGE A THING! THE APPROACH OF THIS PROFESSOR IS ABSOLUTELY THE BEST I HAVE SEEN!
- I liked the instructor and the way she took extra time to provide the AV lectures for us and continually check to make sure we were learning the information.
- The active learning that Dr. Henrickson did with our class was amazing! It helped me learn the material and build on it throughout the course.
- having weekly quizzes, although they were not fun, made me always be prepared for class.
- I felt that I was stimulated to learn more on my own instead of just given the information.
- I felt as though coming to class and keeping the students engaged in active learning was very beneficial for us.

# Don't be discouraged, part 2...

- I really enjoyed the fact that this class was more than just a lecture. We were held accountable for doing our work and used time in class to gain a better understanding of the subject.
- I loved the more hands on approach to teaching of the material. it was something to adjust to but i feel like i have a better understanding now at the end of the course.
- Prof. Henrickson had a very different method of teaching. **And at first I didn't think i liked it at all. I was honestly very worried when i showed up to class and I was even afraid to participate** ( i thought there was going to be a lot of standing up and answering in class)because im really very introvert. **But, as the semester progressed, i think i got what she was trying to say. i found myself studying much earlier for the class, doing the AV lectures. And it really did help me out. Im am very pleased at how this whole new teaching style turned out.** I hope she continues it. It really worked out for me. I also hope all the professors try to do what she's doing. It might make a difference in how much the student engages in their work.

How willing are you to try a significantly different teaching strategy in your class(es)?



Questions?

# References

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