Peer instruction vs. traditional lecture: What’s the impact on student learning?

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The goal of the current project was to compare the effects of two teaching approaches; reciprocal teaching, where students in small pods teach and learn from each other, and traditional lecture. We were interested in the impact each method had on students’ perception of the instructional method and evaluate the influence of the method on students’ grades. Prior to a joint class, students in two separate classes were asked to read two chapters of a text on negotiation. All students read Chapter 1; this chapter was taught via traditional lecture in a combined classroom. The remaining chapter students’ read (either Chapter 2 or 3) was taught using peer instruction (such that half of the class read/taught Chapter 2 and the other class read/taught Chapter 3) so that all three chapters were covered during the class period. Following this activity, a perception survey was completed and during the next class period students completed a quiz over all the material. The results suggest peer instruction does help students learn more than traditional lecture, and that it is the combined experience of teaching and learning through peer instruction that leads to increases in quiz performance.