Have you ever noticed that when you instruct, that you do all the talking, and all of the students sit quietly and are attentive? Or have you noticed that the students are fidgeting in their seats, some even fall asleep? Maybe you are suffering from the Talking Head Syndrome! “I am the instructor; I do the talking, you take notes and listen.” The only time the student talks is when you ask a question in the conclusion part of your lesson plan (30 minutes into the lecture). This style of instructing does not lead to a very interesting or productive class. There is limited or no student participation and only one-way communication.

With effective two- or three-way communication, you will probably find that you can go through the material quicker and with more participation. The two things you have to do are:

➤ Be prepared to close your mouth and listen. You cannot actively listen and talk at the same time. Instructors just hate to be quiet for 10 to 15 seconds. That pregnant pause syndrome.
➤ Ensure that you maintain good class control and lead/direct the answers or discussion. Rephrase the questions and draw out the answers. If Billy gives part of the answer have Susie complete the answer; three-way communication.

Try a new approach. Ask questions instead of lecturing from the pulpit. Use student’s experience, knowledge, and interest to create an active class with two- or three-way communication. For example, instead of telling the student the three main parts of a firearm, hold up a firearm and ask the students, what are the three main parts of a firearm? If they answer trigger, bolt, and magazine, reply you have got one part, the action. What are the other two major parts? When they give you the correct answers or most of it, repeat their answers. Show the correct answers on the overhead; demonstrate those parts on the firearm. You now have created two-way and in some cases three-way communication.

So think about these points next time before you choose lecture as your style of instruction. You do not have to be the talking head in the front of the class. Ask questions instead of lecturing from the pulpit. A lot of students already know some of the gospel.