Active Learning in YOUR Classroom Webinar

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Teaching Commons
What do you think Active Learning is?

• Using the poll feature, share with us what you think active learning is?
• Now let’s consider what isn’t it?
Working Definition

• “...active learning ideally consists of personalized feedback; pre-reading and preparation; motivation and relevance; immediacy in response from lecturer; collaborative learning; provision of just in time feedback; formative assessment; personal response from and engagement with academics: in essence, student-centred learning” (Drinkwater, et al., 2014).
Webinar Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session you will be able to:

• Identify a variety of active learning strategies

• Apply these to specific teaching contexts.
Learning is constructed by what activities the students carry out; learning is about what they do, not about what we teachers do.

John Biggs (www.johnbiggs.com)
Key Terms

• **Active (vs. passive) learning**
  • Doing, experiencing, observing, discovering, evaluating, reflecting

• **Deep (vs. surface) learning**
  • Deeply embedded, integrated, internalized, breadth and depth of knowledge

• **Problem-based learning (PBL)**
  • In PBL, learners encounter a problem and attempt to solve it first with information they already possess, and then through knowledge they gain for the purpose

• **Experiential Learning**
  • Making meaning through reflection on direct (concrete) experience, and application to novel situations
Characteristics of Active Learning

• Students are involved in classroom based activities. Learning is more than passive listening.
• Emphasis is placed on developing student skills/transferable skills
• Teacher has the opportunity to provide immediate feedback to students
• Students are involved in higher order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
Common Barriers to Using Active Learning Strategies

• You are unable to cover as much course content in class time
  • Yes. But the quality of engagement with and retention of course material will be improved.
• Designing Active Learning Strategies means a lot of prep work
  • Try incorporating strategies that require minimum organization and gradually build up your repertoire and confidence in their application.
• Large classes
  • Large classes may restrict your use of certain active learning strategies but does not prevent their use altogether.
• Lack of materials or equipment available
  • Use what you have available. To have students form small groups or pair with a peer requires no materials or equipment.
• Students will resist
  • Be explicit about your intentions and expectations. Articulate these in your learning outcomes. Students may groan but will leave with a fuller appreciation of the content and curriculum.
Teaching Approaches

1. The cognitive approach (Teacher-Centred)

2. The affective approach (Learner-Centred)

Consider this scenario...

• Imagine you are a professor of biology. You have prepared an excellent lecture for your 3 hour class for first year students. You are very excited about all of the knowledge you have to share with them. They greet you on the first day of class with enthusiasm and excitement. However by week 3, this is no longer the case. They are bored. They feel heavy laden with content rich lectures that you are working so hard to prepare.

What Active Learning Strategies might you incorporate into your class to (re)engage the students and stimulate their learning experience?
Active Learning Examples

- Games
- Jigsaw
- Carousel
- Value Lines
- Think-Pair-Share
- Debates
- Labs
- Focused Listing

- Role Play
- Brainstorming
- Directed Paraphrasing
- K/W/L Charts
- Small/Large Group Discussion
- Case Study
- Simulations
Design advice

- Think of tasks that let students link concepts to personal experience
- Think of puzzles, problems, dilemmas, controversies or questions students could address
- Use ‘real life’ scenarios that relate to your field
- Design activities for the situation, eg Lectures, Seminars, Group Projects, Research
- Design activities in line with your strategies and outcomes
“Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in class listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, apply it to their daily lives” (Chickering and Gamson, 1987, p. 3).

One must learn by doing the thing, for though you think you know it-- you have no certainty until you try. (Sophocles, 5th c. B.C.).
Your Feedback is Important

• Please take the next couple of minutes to complete this evaluation as your feedback is very important.

• http://teachingcommonsforms.apps01.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=329436

• You will also see a link to an evaluation form in the chatroom box.

Thank you!
Further Reading


• Kuh, G., Kinzie, J., Cruce, T., Shoup, R., & Gonyea, R. (2006). *Connecting the dots: Multi-faceted analyses of the relationships between student engagement results from the NSSE, and the institutional practices and conditions that foster student success.* Centre for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University.