A Quick Guide to Active Learning

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Objectives

At the end of this presentation, you will be able to:

- Understand what active learning is and why it’s important
- Identify a few easy strategies to implement during your lecture/presentation
Think about a lecture you learned from...

- What did the instructor do?
- What made the instructor effective?
- What did you like about it?
- How do you know you learned something?
What is active learning?

“Active learning is a process whereby students engage in activities, such as reading, writing, discussion, or problem solving that promote analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of class content.”

Lecture is still ok!

From: http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tsal
Why is active learning important?

- Audience attention wanes every 10-20 minutes
- Reinforces important parts of learning
- Provides students and instructors with immediate feedback
- Creates personal connection between students and material
- Create a community of learning
- Activates Learning through student engagement

From: https://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/engaging-students/active-learning.html
How and when do I use an active learning strategy?

- Plan for it!
- Every 15-20 minutes (depending on activity)
- 1-3 times per 50 minute session (depending on activity)
- Don’t rush!
Strategy 0 – Deliberately invite student questions

- Why use this strategy?
  - Gives students a break to digest information
  - Allows students to apply new knowledge to existing
  - Gives both instructor and student feedback on how well they are learning

- When to use:
  - Every lecture, every 5-15 minutes, or after challenging material/concepts
Strategy 0 – Deliberately invite student questions

- How to use
  - Pause your talk and ask for questions
  - Wait at least 30 seconds before moving on

**NOTE:** Be sure to have the students use the microphone or repeat the question!
Strategy 1 – Polling the audience, i.e. “clicker questions” (1-? min)

- Why use this strategy?
  - Gives students a break to digest information
  - Gives both instructor and student feedback on learning
  - Practices questions that may be on quizzes, exams or boards

- When should I use this strategy?
  - Every 10-15 minutes
  - During natural breaks in your material
Strategy 1 – Polling the audience, i.e. “clicker questions” (1-? min)

- How do I do it?
  - Compose a few multiple-choice questions matched to objectives
  - 1 question per slide
  - Give students time to answer using polling system (Reef polling - contact the TSO, tso@ohsu.edu, for instructions – very easy)
  - Explain correct and incorrect answer choices

- What should I do if too many answer incorrectly?
  - Ask students to explain why they chose a particular answer – call on them if you have to
  - Ask for student questions and give them time to formulate a question.
  - Navigate back to the slide where you presented material, do a quick review and then ask for questions.
Strategy 2 – Think/Pair/Share (5-15 min)

- Why should I use this strategy?
  - Promotes higher level thinking
  - Motivates students to learn
  - Accountability - share their answer with a peer
  - Builds community
  - Gives both instructor and student feedback on learning

- When should I use this strategy?
  - When you want students to apply new knowledge, or analyze or criticize a new idea
Strategy 2 – Think/Pair/Share (5-15 min)

How do I do it?
- Compose higher-order question and include in presentation
- Have students think to themselves about the question (1-2 minutes)
- Have students pair up and share their answers, making sure each shares their thoughts while the other listens (2 minutes, 1 min each)
- Have students share their answers with the class
- Be sure to correct misconceptions once in the sharing phase
- Optional – open up to all-class discussion if many differing opinions exist

TIPS FOR SUCCESS!
- Wander around the room, and listen during the first two parts to motivate students to participate. Don’t engage yet, though.
- Make sure students know the rules of the activity beforehand
Strategy 3 – Muddiest Point (3-? min)

- Why should I use this strategy?
  - Gives both instructor and student feedback on learning
  - Clears up confusion with challenging material

- When to use:
  - After a lecture with challenging concepts
  - If you notice during lecture the students don’t seem to “get it”
Strategy 3 – Muddiest Point (3-? min)

- How to use
  - At the end of the class, ask students to write down, on a notecard, the most confusing or unclear part of the lecture
  - Give them a few minutes to formulate a question
  - Collect the notecards
  - Either address the questions then, at the next session or via email or Sakai
  - **OPTIONAL**: Instead of using notecards, use the polling system to ask students to enter their questions

**TIP FOR SUCCESS!** Be sure to answer all student questions in one way or another
How do I know which strategy to choose?

- Always practice #0 – providing structured time for student questions is one of the easiest and most important strategies you can employ
- Keep it simple
- With which strategy do you feel comfortable?
- Not sure? Contact Sarah Jacobs at the Teaching and Learning Center for help in deciding and planning!
Think about a lecture you learned from...

- Were any of the strategies presented used in that effective lecture you thought about?
- If not, what strategies were used? Were they active?
- How could you use them in your own practice?
Observation Rubric

### Instruction Observation Rubric

The purpose of this form is to provide timely feedback on faculty sessions in Transitions of Medicine.

**Instruction:** First Name, Last Name
**Week/Day/Time:** [Jan 01/17], Time: 2:00 p.m.
**Block:** ABC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Tense Verbal</th>
<th>Attentive</th>
<th>Involved</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief overview of topic given (i.e., concept map, global view down to specifics — who is this session for?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content presented (i.e., slide content or in-person learning and/or lecture, warm-up activity, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>An interesting real-world case, a personal story, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class attendance related (as stated in block)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2: Comments</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Racial Teaching and Pedagogical Strategies

1. Delivers strong student questions:
   - Answers student questions thoroughly and with respect
   - Creates opportunities for higher order thinking (e.g., interpretation, synthesis, evaluation)
   - Instructor moves around the room to engage entire audience
   - Active learning is integrated into the instruction (e.g., active discussion, clicker questions, hands-on activity)
   - If active learning attempted, provides clear instructions for learning activities
   - In addition to clicker, other educational/institutional technology was used
   - Provides formative assessments to check for understanding (i.e., How does the instructor know the students are learning what is being taught? This could look like informal, clicker, practice quiz, etc.)

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Resources

- Center for Teaching Excellence, Cornell University:
  https://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/engaging-students/active-learning.html
  http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/engaging-students/using-effective-questions.html
- Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan:
  http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tsal
- The Community of Inquiry - https://coi.athabascau.ca/
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