

Motivating Students to Become Active Learners

A talk and workshop
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Today's Agenda

Part One: Understanding Active Learning

Part Two: Motivating Students to Learn Actively

Part Three: Practical Ideas for Active Learning

Before we begin...

Write one of these sentence starters on a post-it, and finish it with your own information:

Today I hope that we...

The main reason I came here today is...

This afternoon, I absolutely DO NOT want to...

I'm looking forward to...

One thing I want to know is...

Right now, I feel...

Part One

What is active learning?

How can an emphasis on active learning improve the quality of teaching and learning?

active learning: a simple definition

“Active learning is anything course-related that all students in a class session are called upon to do, other than simply watching, listening and taking notes.”

Felder and Brent, 2009

Examples of active learning tasks:

- * answering a question
- * solving a problem
- * making a plan
- * quizzing other students
- * brainstorming ideas
- * discussing an issue
- * predicting lesson material
- * reviewing previous lessons
- * writing comments on an article

Benefits of active learning

- Focus on learning, not teaching
- A form of assessment
- Students take responsibility for their own learning
- Students are more involved
- Students pay attention for longer
- Gives students a head start on homework and assessment
- Adds variety to the lesson

3 stages of an active learning task

1. Ask students to form pairs or small groups (3 – 5 students)
2. Assign a question or problem to discuss
3. After 2-4 minutes, call on a few students to share what they talked about

Four classic active learning tasks:

Think-Pair-Share

One-Minute Write

Skeleton notes

TAPPS (Thinking-aloud pair problem solving)

Let's do a Think-Pair-Share activity together

Think about this question:

How do you get students' attention at the end of a speaking activity?

Think for one minute, then share your answer with another person.

One-Minute Write

Write for one minute on this topic:

How do you react when you see students not participating in group work?

Some common objections to active learning

Objection #1

“I don’t have time for active learning in my classroom. I need to follow the syllabus.”

Active learning is a way of covering your syllabus that gives students extra opportunities to absorb the material, therefore increasing the chances they will succeed!

Some common objections to active learning

Objection #2

“I like the idea, but I can’t get my students to participate.”

Use active learning from the very first week. Keep the tasks short, but use them in every lesson. Tell the class that the tasks will help them prepare for homework and assessments.

Some common objections to active learning

Objection #3

“I see students talking, but I’m not sure if they are really doing the tasks.”

Walk around, monitor them. If you suspect a group is not doing work, stand and watch them. Tell the class you will call on some of them give you a short report on their task.

Two common mistakes teachers make when doing active learning

1. They let tasks run on too long.

Tasks should only take 2 – 5 minutes.

2. They call on volunteers to give a report.

Instead of asking for volunteers, call on students randomly.

Part Two

What is motivation?

How can I motivate students to participate in active learning tasks?

What is motivation?

A brief definition –

Motivation is “the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity.” (R.C. Gardner)

Two Types of Motivation

Extrinsic motivation – rewards and punishments

Intrinsic motivation – personally rewarding

Malone and Lepper's Taxonomy of Intrinsic Motivation

Challenge – pursuing a goal that is slightly beyond one's level

Curiosity – wanting to know more about something

Control – enjoying a feeling of mastery

Fantasy – playing a game, using one's imagination

Cooperation – working together with others

Competition – comparing ourselves favorably with others

Recognition – having others recognize our work

Challenge

Give students a question that is slightly beyond their current knowledge. Ask them to discuss in groups. Call on several students for answers, then reveal your answer.

Curiosity

Share with the students part of something (a picture, a text, a video). Don't let them see or read more than a short excerpt. Ask them to discuss the missing part. Then show them the answer.

Control

Give students choice in your lesson plan. Provide two or more options and let them choose. Allow them to choose the type of skill to work on.

Fantasy

Allow students to use their creative skills by drawing, sketching, acting, and filming. Give them tasks where they imagine themselves in the future, the past, or some alternative world.

Cooperation

Regularly ask students to work together on projects and collaborative tasks.

Competition

Plan activities where students can compete in pairs, in groups, or the class vs. the teacher.

Recognition

Look for ways to let everyone see your students' work. Put their compositions on the board, or on the school's website.

Let's do some more active learning tasks!

You are about to read an article, titled
“Five Things To Know About Jay Chou”

In a minute, you will receive a blank slip of paper.

If your paper is white, write 3 things you know about Jay Chou.

If your paper is green, write 3 things you want to know about Jay Chou.

Part Three

What are some basic principles of teaching and learning that can form the basis of active learning practice?

What are some different tasks I can use in my classroom this week?

Skeleton Notes

Listen to a brief lecture and take notes using the outline provided for you.

Three Principles of Teaching and Learning

1. Retrieval – “the testing effect” – students learn and retain more when they are challenged to produce information from their long-term memory

Example: *“I will close my book and quiz myself on what I read.”*

2. Predicting – students learn more effectively when they are asked to predict the content of a new chapter or new text

Example: *“I will guess 5 things in this chapter before I start to read.”*

3. Interleaving – students learn more successfully when they space out their learning and mix up the skills they work on

Example: *“I will study in short periods several times during the week, and work on more than one skill each time.”*

(source: **Small Teaching** by James Lang)

Retrieval

- At the beginning of class, ask your students what they remember from last time
- At the end of class, ask them what they remember from your lesson
- Put them in pairs to recall 6 things from today's lesson

Predicting

- Show students the title of a text and ask them to predict 3 things they will read about
- Collaborate on a mind map with the class on the topic of the next unit
- At the end of a unit, ask them to predict what they will read about in the next unit

Interleaving

- Review and ask questions frequently
- Make connections between information in the current lesson and previous lessons
- Make sure quizzes and exams cover knowledge from earlier in the course

Now on with some more active learning tasks!

You will receive three cookies. DO NOT EAT THEM!

Put them in your hand, and listen to a short talk. You must interrupt the speaker with questions.

Each time you ask a question, you can put a cookie down on the table. When all three are on the table, you can start eating

and

you can steal the cookies from one person sitting next to you!!!

Quiz time!

Right now, you will be quizzed on what you have heard so far.

Listen carefully to each statement.

If you think the statement is true, put your left thumb on your right earlobe.

If you think the statement is false, put your right pinkie on your left eyebrow.

If you really don't know the answer, shrug your shoulders and roll your eyes.

Next task!

The lecturer has hidden several envelopes around the room. Each envelope contains three questions about the article we read earlier. Your group must write the answers to the questions and put them on the board.

Think-Pair-Share (again)

Think about this question:

How can we use technology in active learning?

Think for one minute, then share your answer with another person.

One more active learning task!

You will receive a small slip of paper. This is your exit slip.

Write:

- 3 things you learned
- 2 things you found interesting
- and
- 1 thing you still want to know

When you finish writing, you can give your exit slip to the speaker.

Thank you!!!!!!

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Join the LINE group: [activelearningtaiwan](#)

and share your ideas about active learning!