5 Active Learning Techniques in 45 Minutes

Randy A. Riddle
Duke Center for Instructional Technology
What is Active Learning?

- Lectures
- Quizzes and tests
- Group work
- Writing
- Problem sets
- Discussions
- Readings
- Note-taking
1. Background Knowledge Probe

Goals:

● Help instructors determine where to begin
● Helps students focus on what is important

Method:

● Instructor asks questions with simple, quick responses through short answers, a show of hands, etc. at beginning of a class or activity.
What is Active Learning?

- Lectures
- Quizzes and tests
- Group work
- Writing
- Problem sets
- Discussions
- Readings
- Note-taking
2. Think - Pair - Share

Goals:

- Give students time to reflect and organize thoughts on something new
- Give students opportunity to debate a different point of view

Method:

- Give students a problem
- Allow them time to think individually and write something down
- Have them share their ideas in pairs
- Call on groups to share what they discussed
Defining active learning

**Active learning** can be defined as an investment of a significant amount of mental energy and a high level of psychological involvement in the learning process. Student involvement in the learning process may be conceptualized as falling on a continuum of attention or engagement, ranging from active learning on one end to passive learning on the other. - Joe Cuseo, Marymount College
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. - Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan
Defining active learning

Active learning is a model of instruction that focuses the responsibility of learning on learners. - Wikipedia

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.

What makes an active learning exercise well done?

- What should students get out of a well-designed class activity?
- What should the instructor get out of a well-designed activity?
3. Brainwriting

Goal:

- generate many ideas in a short amount of time
- encourage uniform participate in a group
- encourage students to synthesize new information

Method:

- Pass out cards or have students use a sheet of paper to jot down ideas and pass along to the next person; stop and have individuals read what is in the list they have
What makes an active learning exercise well done?

- moves students towards a learning objective
- informs the instructor (formative assessment)
- holds students accountable
- gives students practice applying knowledge
- allows students to assess their own knowledge
- engages students in their own learning
A problem

Professor Mustard has decided to flip his class. He has given his students his learning objectives and selected readings that they must complete before class sessions each week. However, he knows that the students won’t prepare unless he gives them an incentive.

What ideas would you suggest he do to hold the students accountable for the work outside class?
4. Gallery Walk

Goal:

- Students work cooperatively on ideas to solve a problem
- Students assess solutions to problems

Method:

- Divide students into groups
- The groups compile notes on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper
- Have the groups walk around room to different lists or options in the room, voting on and discussing them
- Have groups report out on the items they voted for
5. Group Review

Goal:

- Give students an opportunity to review before an exam
- Give opportunity for students to ask questions or debate an answer

Method:

- Use a PowerPoint template to run a “Jeopardy” or similar styled game.
- Students can answer in teams.
- Teams of students could make their own QA for the quiz.