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Enter the session ID: Active2
Engaging Students Using Active Learning Strategies

Learning to Teach Day
Saturday, November 10, 2018
Carrie Hanson & Christina Popescu

Teaching and Learning Services
http://www.mcgill.ca/tls
Workshop Goals

• Identify the importance of active learning and what it entails
• Gain insight about various active learning approaches in the classroom
• Select appropriate activities for students from a range of active learning strategies
• Identify and overcome challenges in the implementation of active learning techniques
Ask yourself: What do I want to achieve with active learning?

• Allow students to get to know each other, reduce their anxiety and alienation.
• Find out what students already know about a new topic.
• Guide students through learning process, help them focus on the crucial parts of the material, develop their reading or writing skills, etc.
• Provide opportunities for practice and application.
• Provide opportunities for reflection on the material and/or the learning process.
Choose your icebreaker

A. No Smiling
B. 7 words
C. Desert island
D. Favorite fictional character
What do I want to achieve?

The icebreaker activity was designed to:

• Allow students to get to know each other
• Reduce their anxiety and alienation
How much teaching experience do you have?

A. None  
B. Ran tutorials/workshops  
C. Guest lectured  
D. Taught part of a course  
E. Taught an entire course
As a student, I learn best when...

A. Listening to lectures
B. Discussing the readings
C. Talking about real-world implications or contemporary examples
D. Group work
E. ‘Hands-on’ activities (ex. lab work)
F. Enjoying break-time/recess
Have you heard of active learning before today?

A. Absolutely! I have used it in my tutorials or experienced it in my classes.
B. I know what it is, but I’ve never experienced it.
C. I think I may have some idea of what active learning could be.
D. Never heard of it before!
What do I want to achieve?

This activity was designed to:

• **Find out what students already know** about a new topic.
What is learning?

Acquisition of knowledge or skills
What is active learning?

Active learning is a student-centered approach whereby students **engage in their learning** through meaningful activities and **think about their learning** during the process.

**Student-centered learning**

- Focus is on students rather than the teacher
- Teacher facilitates students’ learning

Carleton College (https://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/gallerywalk/active.html)
University of Michigan Center for Learning and Teaching (http://www.crlt.umich.edu/active_learning_introduction)
What is active learning?

What you need:

- A prepared teacher
- Engaged students

What you don’t need:

- Fancy technology
- Fancy classrooms

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Engaged Students

- Participate in class discussions
- Reflect on difficult concepts
- Brainstorm
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Why active learning?

• Improve critical thinking skills, increased retention and transfer of new information, increased motivation, improved interpersonal skills
• Decrease failure rate by 12%, improve test scores by 6%
• Students are 1.5 times more likely to fail with traditional instruction compared to active learning
• Student improves from 50th percentile to 68th percentile with implementation of active learning

From UBC EDCP371 951 2010/Active learning
(Freeman et al, 2012)
(Prince, 2004)
# How to make learning active

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionally Passive Activities</th>
<th>Make it Active</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readings, videos, audio</td>
<td>Use them to prepare for class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recordings</td>
<td>• Ask students to submit questions they would address to the group</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guide the activity with questions for students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ask students to relate the videos/audios with theories they are reviewing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One sentence summary/One-minute paper</td>
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<td>Read/watch/listen as a class, pause to discuss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture/Presentations</td>
<td>Incorporate polling and/or questions</td>
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<td>Incorporate activities and discussions such as think-pair-share</td>
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<td>Stop lecture midway and have groups of students compare notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrations</td>
<td>Involve students in the demonstrations, have them reflect and analyze the process</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Have students predict the outcome individually then discuss it in groups or with the whole class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From UBC EDCP371 951 2010/Active learning
The active learning cycle

- Purpose
- Preparation and Instructions
- Implementation
- Debrief

Definitions:
- Conceptualization

Icebreaker, Experience, Conceptualization, Activity, Challenges, Tools, Strategies

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Activity: Individual Reading

- Read the handout
- Mark strategies you could imagine using in your class with a “✓”
Activity: One-Minute Paper

- Select one new strategy you might like to try
- In a few sentences, write:

1. Why did you choose this strategy?
2. How would you use this strategy?
Activity: Buzz Groups

• In groups of 2-3

• Name the topic you will cover with the activity

• Share your strategy and ideas for implementation
What do I want to achieve?

These activities were designed to:

• Provide opportunities for **practice** and **application**.
Send the problem

Swap cards with your neighbour

On the card you received, write:
• 1 proactive strategy to prevent the problem before it even happens
• 1 reactive strategy to manage the problem once it happens
What challenges might you face?

Now that you’ve identified which strategy you want to use, try to anticipate a challenge you might run into when running this activity.

Write out the challenge in 1-2 sentences on your cue card.
Common challenges with active learning

- Students not participating (e.g., discussions, group work)
- Preparing/not having all the materials
- The activity not working
- The group gets off topic/distracted
- Students behaving inappropriately
- Timing (too much/ too little)
What do I want to achieve?

This brainstorming & discussion activity was designed to:

• Providing **opportunities for reflection** on the material and/or the learning process.

• Prepare for the realities of implementing active learning strategies.
Active Learning Classrooms

• Group seating
• Smartboard technology
• Whiteboards (BYO Markers)
• Projector connections from group tables
• Classrooms at McGill
Summary

• What are two new things you learned today?

• What would you like to learn more about?

• Do you feel comfortable applying what you learned today?
What do I want to achieve?

This activity was designed to:

• Guide students through learning process, help them focus on the crucial parts of the material, develop their reading or writing skills, etc.
Activities we used today:

• Polling
• Brainstorming
• Focused Reading
• One-Minute Paper
• Buzz Groups
• Send a problem
• Group Discussion
Thank you!

Questions?

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