

10 Tips for Engaging and Active Learning

Are you ready to move from ‘sage on the stage’ to ‘guide on the side?’ There has been much research and press about active learning. When you start making online materials for your class, there is a great opportunity to redesign the face to face learning experience for students to use higher level cognitive skills. Here are some techniques to consider.

10 Techniques for Engaging, Active Classrooms

- 1) The One-Minute Paper encourages students to reflect on material, clarify what is important and raise questions. This technique is when the instructor poses an open-ended question and gives students one minute to write down their answer.
- 2) Muddiest or Clearest Point is a variation of the one-minute paper where you are asking students to write about what they do or don't understand from the lecture.
- 3) Think-Pair-Share is when you divide the class into smaller groups, have them work through an activity, and then share back to the class.
- 4) Student as Teacher is when students teach the topic. For example, you could have students watch a video lecture and then have a student teach the main ideas from that lecture or have students write the quiz/test questions. A variation is to have students evaluate each other, peer to peer, using rubrics provided by the instructor.
- 5) The fishbowl is a technique where students are asked to write down one question from the material that they do not understand and put that into a bowl as they come to class. Then the instructor pulls out a few questions and answers them during the class.
- 6) Finger or index card signals is a technique where you poll the class for a question. For example, students hold up green or red index cards to represent yes or no when responding to a question and then the instructor (or student) talks through the correct answer. Poll Anywhere is a common app for this and clickers are common tools.
- 7) Puzzles, case studies, and project-based learning are techniques where a student works through specific examples to try and understand the main concepts and alternate theories. An example is when an illustration is shown with something missing and students need to figure out what is missing, what that thing does, and what happens when it is missing.
- 8) An active review session is a technique where the instructor poses questions to students in groups where they can work through and find answers together.
- 9) Concept maps and lists can be used to illustrate and compare ideas. This can be done individually, in groups or instructor led.
- 10) Panel discussions and debates get students engaged and active in class. Students represent different viewpoints and answer questions from a moderator.

References and Additional Resources:

[Cal State LA Active Learning in the Classroom](#)

[University of Florida Active Learning Tools](#)

[Todd Finley's Handy One-Page Infographic for Active Learning Strategies](#)