

Getting Them Engaged: Activating Learning in the Classroom

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The setting

1. “Active learning” is high on the list of current best teaching practices.
2. In a 2008 survey by DoIT Academic Technology, 120 of 178 respondents chose “*Making lecture more interactive and engaging*” as their **number 1 teaching challenge** from a list of 15 choices.

Today:

- **Exploration and ideas**
 - What is Active Learning?
 - Creating Active Learning in our classrooms without reinventing the course
- **No Experts, no Cookbooks!**
- **Leverage the community – you get to do some work**

What is Active Learning?

(Why all the buzz?)

- **Google search returns more than 121,000,000 hits**
- **From Wikipedia:** “*Active learning*, as the name suggests, is a type of instruction which some teachers employ to involve pupils during the learning process.”
- **“Learning by doing”**
- **???**

Lots of AL techniques exist

- “One Minute Paper”
- “Muddiest/Clearest Point”
- “Turn to your neighbor”
- Brainstorming
- Group work

Associated with the term "learning by doing", "active learning" is often contrasted with less active forms of instruction (e.g. lecture).

-Wikipedia

What others?

- Using the Stickies and pens provided, write down ideas for active learning that you have seen or tried
- Write BIG, with one idea per Sticky note
- Place your stickies on the board at the front of the room

Question:

Does activity necessarily ensure learning?

Example:

ES101, Forum on the Environment

- Nearly 75% “active”
- Groups, videos, case studies, online

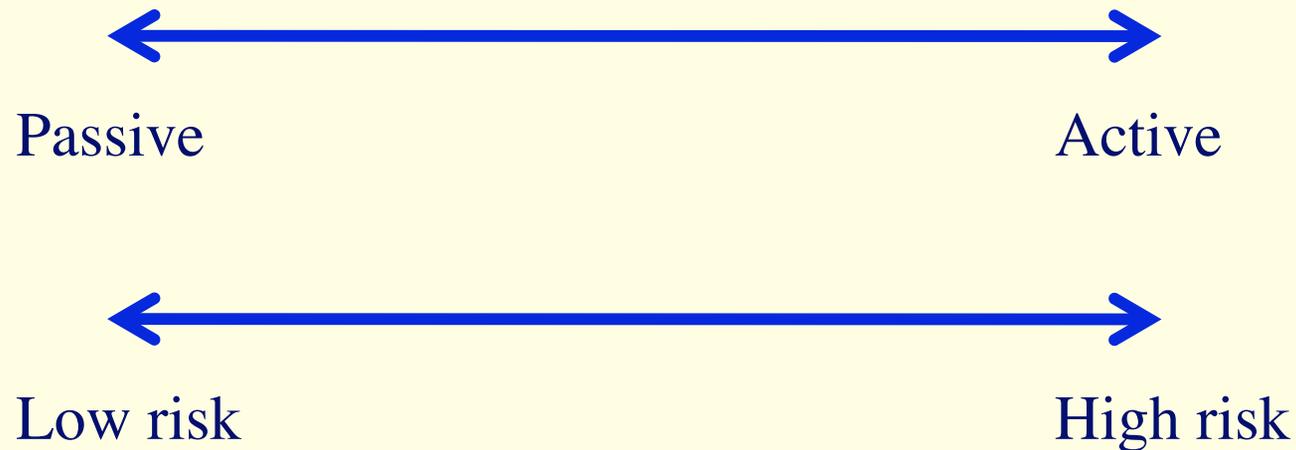
“The demands, article analysis..... case studies and learning logs were formulaic, tedious, and boring. For these reasons the chief skill enhanced through this course is the capacity to communicate outwardly meaningful, accurate, and concerned dialogue on an issue when internally preoccupied, unknowledgeable, and inattentive.”

“I really enjoyed this environmental studies class and am very happy I took it. Working in groups and listening to different lectures each class enabled me to stay focused and interested throughout the semester. The class was well-structured and I liked how Learn-it UW (*sic*) and online articles were used.”

“Before this semester I had never taken a course in environmental studies. While I have taken courses related to environmental studies, such as biology or chemistry, my knowledge of issues like climate change or other environmental issues was pretty minimal. However, by taking ES101 I feel I have gained a very solid understanding of the major issues facing our environment today. *While I do not remember many specific numerical facts or complex details of certain issues, I will walk away from this class with the ability to look at and analyze an environmental problem in a meaningful way.*”

Why such a range?

Learning activities continuum



Place the activities from the board on this continuum.

Which are likely to generate the most resistance? Why?

WHEN would you use each type, for best effect?

Moving beyond “technique”
(YOUR TURN)

Making it active

- Recall a section of lecture, a concept, or a topic in a class that you routinely teach or are involved with
- BRIEFLY describe your lecturette to the group of 3 people nearest you.
 - What class is it for?
 - How do you ordinarily teach this concept?
 - How active would you say it usually is? (NOTE: you are not trying to get an 'A' in Workshop today!)
- Brainstorm with your group one low risk and one high risk way to make your lecturette more active
- Try out your experiment with your group – I will take volunteers to try it out with the whole group at the end

Making it active

- Volunteers will have **5 minutes** to try out their technique
- Using the Index cards provided please note your impressions for our volunteer(s)
 - What did you like about the activity?
 - What wasn't quite clear?
 - Where would you place this on the active learning continuum of risk?
 - Other comments?

Wrap-up and reflection

- Take a couple minutes to note for your self what you learned in this session.
 - What struck you as interesting or significant? What made it so?
 - What information can you use from today?
- Take home impressions, questions, comments?

Thank you!

Please feel free to contact me at:
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