

Classroom Practice

LAs and TAs work with and support students in the classroom during Active Learning activities

Michael Prince explains, “Active learning is generally defined as any instructional method that **engages students in the learning process**. In short, active learning requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing” ([Prince, 2004](#)). Prince’s definition is drawn from foundational work done by Bonwell and Eison ([Bonwell, 2000](#) and [Eison, 2010](#)) and has been widely accepted.

Making Time for Active Learning

Using active learning strategies does not require abandoning the lecture format. Rather, adding small active learning strategies can make lecturing more effective for student learning. These activities give students just a minute or two to check their understanding of recent material, practice a skill or highlight gaps in their knowledge before giving an explanation.

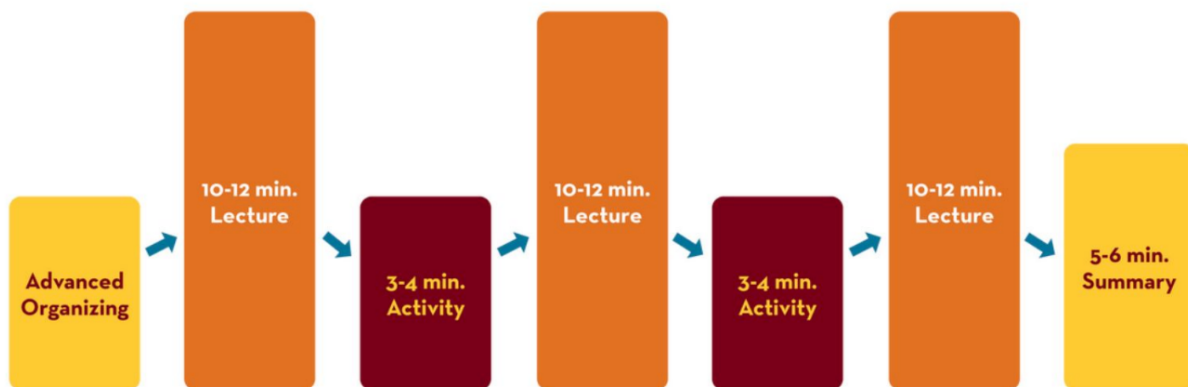
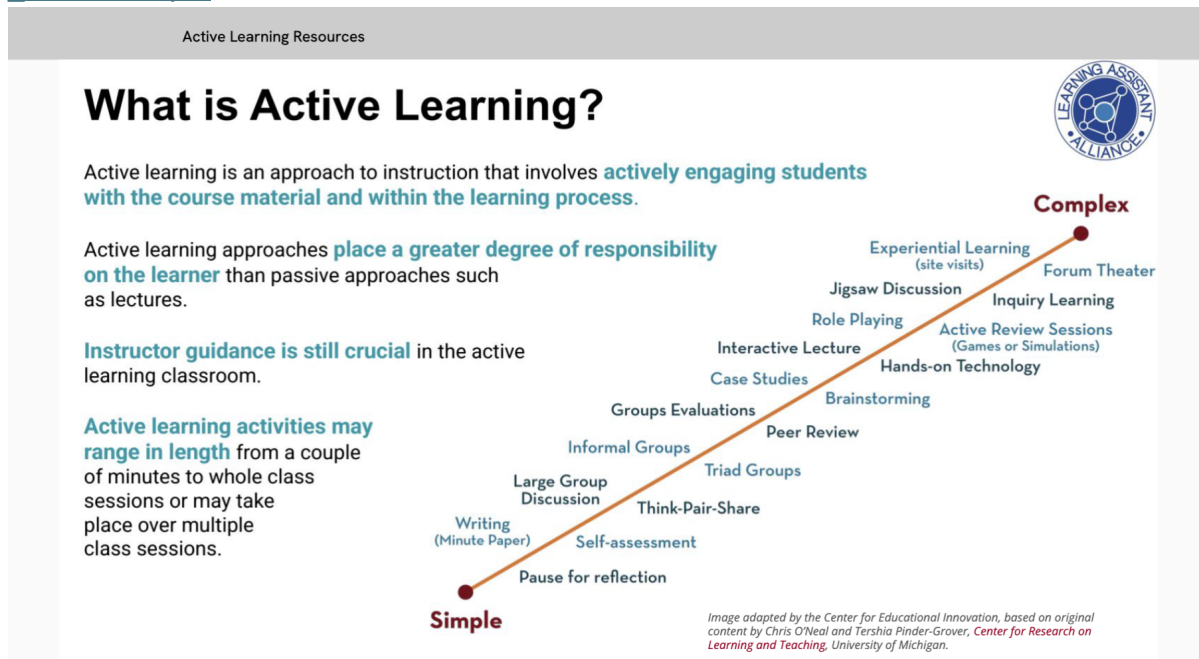


Image adapted from Thinking Together: Collaborative Learning in the Sciences, Harvard University, Derek Bok Center.

Some useful websites for Active Learning

- Definition of Active Learning and some techniques and strategies from the University of Minnesota Center for Educational Innovation (CEI):
<https://cei.umn.edu/teaching-resources/active-learning>

- Definition of Active Learning and Resources from the University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning & Teaching (CRLT):
https://crlt.umich.edu/active_learning_introduction
- How to Incorporate Active Learning in your Classes from the University of Michigan CRLT:
https://crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource_files/Active%20Learning%20Continuum_accessible.pdf



- Active Learning Techniques: <https://teaching.tools/activities>

Active Learning Resources

Filters
Clear All

Difficulty Clear

☐ Easy: great for all instructors

☐ Medium: takes a little practice

☐ Complex: mastered over time

Prep Time Required Clear

☐ Low: less than 5 minutes

☐ Average: 5 to 30 minutes

☐ High: more than 30 minutes

Class Size Clear

☐ 0 to 7 students

☐ 8 to 15 students

☐ 16 to 25 students

☐ 26 to 50 students

☐ Over 50 students

Active Learning Clear

☐ Individual engagement

☐ Small group engagement

☐ Large group engagement

3-2-1 Survey

Conduct a structured exit survey. For example, ask 3 concepts students learned, 2 applications that interest them, and 1 question they still have.

Affective Response

Let students express their first impressions about the topics or skills you're about to cover, or to material they have prepared for this session.

Backchannel Discussion

Open an online chat in the background of a live class session.

Background Knowledge Probe

Give a short pre-test to evaluate what students already know about the material you're about to cover.

Brainstorm

Quickly generate a large quantity of ideas on a topic.

Active Learning Library

Diversify Your Lesson

Using diverse activities promotes student engagement and learning. It can also make the lesson more rewarding to teach.

Start Small

You don't have to revolutionize the way you teach tomorrow. Try integrating just one new activity type into your lesson.

Explore Your Options

Use the filters provided to identify activities that may work best for your specific teaching context.

Ready to create a lesson plan?
Try the Lesson Planning Tool

<https://teaching.tools/activities>