

Active Learning

What is it?

Active Learning is a student-centred approach that focuses on what students learn and how they learn. This method typically involves hands-on group work and emphasizes engaged activities to foster deep learning and understanding of instructional concepts.

John Dewey's advancement of experiential learning is believed by many to be the foundation of active learning (Liszka, 2013). For effective experiential learning to emerge, learning must occur in a real-world context in which learners can discover by experimenting, asking questions and reflecting on results (Liszka, 2013).

Active learning forces learners to be accountable and become more involved in the learning process than a traditional classroom with a teacher-centred approach. The conventional process of lecturing, although necessary and important to an extent it does little to create engagement and yields a power imbalance.

Why is it important?

Active learning can create a learning environment of shared power which may lead to increased participation and meaning. Through the use of inquiry-based activities and open-ended questions, learners are challenged to develop their understanding of the material, which serves as a means of motivation (Gordy et al., 2020). In addition, active learning may help support the development of independent learners capable of taking greater responsibility for their learning. According to Gordy et al. (2020) students who engage in active learning describe increased satisfaction and decreased anxiety. They also reported feeling more positive about their educational experiences. Additionally, learners more easily developed relationships with peers, leading to more discussion and increased understanding of topics. Moreover, students felt more comfortable when working collaboratively as part of a group and developed increased confidence when asking questions in class.

How can you use it?

According to Gordy et al. (2020), spatial equity, technology, and peer collaboration and interactions were critical themes of active learning. It is essential to establish a welcoming, non-threatening learning environment of equality. Furniture must be arranged in a way that reflects shared power within the room. This can be done by creating a circular seating arrangement. All learners should be able to see screens with unobstructed views. Establish diverse groups of five or six learners to sit together as a support network, generate ideas and reflect on learning. Select activities that reflect learning goals and key concepts.

Examples

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Group discussions● Group discovery● Group brainstorming● One minute reflections● Peer review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Peer instruction● Role plays● Problem based learning● Game based learning● In class demonstrations
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References

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