

Active Learning

What Is Active Learning?

“Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in class listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.”

A. Chickering and Z. Gamson, "Seven Principles for Good Practice," *AAHE Bulletin* 39 (1987): 3.

“Active learning is ... 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. ... The core elements of active learning are student activity and engagement in the learning process.”

Michael Prince, "Does Active Learning Work? A Review of the Research," *Journal of Engineering Education* 93 (2004): 223.

Why Should I Practice Active Learning?

- Increases students’ satisfaction and positive attitude towards course material
- Motivates students to be engaged learners and builds self-confidence and self-reliance
- Increases content knowledge, critical thinking and recall of course content
- Gets students involved in higher order thinking (e.g., analysis, synthesis, creative thinking, problem solving)

What Does Active Learning Look Like?

When you receive new information, are you able to ...



Dimensions of Active Learning

Mentality and Behaviors

Practice Positive Thinking: Self-Efficacy, Resilience, Personal Responsibility, Hope

Develop a Growth Mindset: Recognize that everyone has the capacity for intellectual improvement.

Become an Intrinsic Learner: Develop a curiosity for learning and a desire for personal growth.

Practice Positive Behaviors: Set Goals, Prioritize Tasks, Active Listening, Focus on Wellness

Reading: The P-R-R Method

Step 1: Preview

Skim: Examine sub-headings and introduction

Question: Develop preview questions about the topic

Keywords: Circle keywords (in bold or italic type)

Knowledge: Recall prior knowledge

Step 2: Read

Study-Read

Read each sub-section at a time
Look up unfamiliar words
Rephrase the section in your own words
Compare information with prior knowledge
Answer preview questions; ask new questions

Mark the Text

Highlight the main idea in a specific color
Highlight major supporting ideas in a new color
Circle specialized vocabulary words
Use symbols (MI = Main Idea; 1, 2, 3 ...)
Write key words or phrases to summarize sections
Draw a chart or graph to illustrate an argument

Step 3: Review

Main Idea: Return to the main idea (what has the chapter argued?)

Scan: Scan each subheading to review the supporting details

Questions: Review and answer all of your reading questions

Reorganize: Organize the material in your own way for retrieval

Note Taking

Arrive early to class and focus on the class content (e.g., review material)
Practice “hard listening” skills (Sensing, Understanding, Evaluation, Responding)
Choose a preferred note-taking method (e.g., Outline, Cornell, Mapping)
Pay attention to the instructor’s verbal and non-verbal cues
Reorganize, summarize, and develop class notes after class

Studying

Create a weekly planner with dedicated study time (2 hours for each hour in class)
Study in a quiet area and eliminate distractions (phone, texts, internet)
Create study aids (e.g., flash cards, review sheets, quiz questions)
Participate in study groups and utilize support resources (e.g., Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction)

Resources

“Active Learning and Adapting Teaching Techniques,” University of Toronto, Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation.

Gardner, John N., and Betsy O. Barefoot. *Your College Experience: Strategies for Success*. 13th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2018.

Gore, Paul A., et al. *Connections: Empowering College and Career Success*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016.