

Teaching Tip Tuesday

Active Learning

Active learning is a broad strategy of engaging all students directly in the learning process by making them interact with content and/or each other. Strategies often involve writing, talking, problem solving, and reflecting. Active learning is more effective than passive learning in promoting achievement of higher level learning outcomes.

Sample Active Learning Activities

- Minute Papers
- Reflections
- Summaries
- Self-Assessments
- Jigsaw discussions
- Inquiry learning
- Peer Review
- Brainstorming
- Concept mapping
- Case Studies
- Think-Pair-Share

Both faculty and students are often hesitant about active learning. It is harder for students to critically engage with material than it is to passively receive prepackaged information, and it is harder for faculty to cajole compliance than to just lecture. Resistance is compounded when active learning opportunities are poorly planned, or perceived to be superfluous.

Reducing Resistance

- Start small, with low stakes activities.
- Give clear instructions so students understand what to do and how much time it will take.
- Provide feedback on performance.
- Make expected learning goal of the exercise clear to students.
- Ensure alignment with learning outcomes.
- Target difficult-to-understand concepts.
- Plan frequent use to increase comfort levels.