5 MINUTE TEACHING DEVELOPMENT

Encouraging Classroom Participation

What is it?

Active (engaged) learning is any strategy or activity that requires student engagement “in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing (reflection).”¹ It is a process that keeps students connected in their learning and can require them to use critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Why is it important?

As shared during the 5-minute Faculty Development Session on “Effective Lesson Planning”, you need to draw the students in and plan activities that will engage them in their learning. As part of the planning process, you need to not only consider the amount of time that will be required for each learning activity in the classroom but also your experience and comfort level with the active learning technique to be used as well as making sure the planned activity meets the intended learning outcome(s).

How do I do it?

Active learning should include 3 critical steps as part of your planning – they are CPR:

**C – Content:** meaning that you provide specific instructions for the activity – so the students know what they are to be doing.

**P – Participation:** allowing sufficient time for the students to be engaged with the activity but not too much time they have moved the discussion off topic, and

**R – Reflection** or time to debrief, the most critical step – helping the students to connect the learning and the intended outcomes.

Some examples of active learning activities are:

- **The Questioning Technique:** Prepare questions that mix the 3 levels of remembering, applying and evaluating.  
  **Remembering questions** are related to the recall and basic knowledge of information taught/learned.  
  **Application questions** require the students to apply, to relate or to analyze newly learned concepts or principles.  
  **Higher order questions** are the evaluation questions that challenge students to exercise judgment and be able to justify their answer(s). These types of questions help in the development of critical thinking and/or problem solving skills. Remember to give 30-60 seconds before asking for a response. You could also link questioning with the think-pair-share process as well as the use of ‘clickers’ to assess students’ learning as an entire class. Think-pair-share is that after the problem or question is posed, students are given 30-60 seconds to develop their individual response, then they are asked to pair up and explain their response to one another for 2-4 minutes. Then ask for pairs or groups to share their responses.

- **Thinking Colors (Thinking Hats):** Students are organized into small groups of 5 and each is assigned a card of colored paper. The color of the paper signifies the role they should represent during the discussion with the instructor/facilitator serving as the blue card.
- Gaming: A fun way to engage the students in their learning. The incorporation of different types of ‘games’ during class allows for students to apply concepts, integrate new knowledge, and / or review previous learned material. Many students enjoy the incorporation of games as part of their learning.

More advanced engaged learning activities that require additional planning by the instructor are case-based scenarios, team-based learning or problem-based learning.

**Quick tips**

In summary:
- Think about the intended outcomes or skills you want the student to be able to do at the end of the class and use the active learning technique to help you reach that goal.
- Be mindful of the time needed to complete the activity – it takes more time than thought so plan for 1-2 activities for each 50-minute lecture.
- Don’t forget to check that you have incorporated CPR as part of your planning purpose – with most emphasis on the R.
- Pick a couple of different active learning activities to try – it may not work perfect the first time, but you can always refine it for the next time.

**More information**