

Activities to Get Students Active and Involved

<p>Jigsaw</p> <p>Divide and conquer strategy where multiple groups become 'experts' in subtopics of a larger topic. Each group learns part of the larger topic and when the groups are reformed, experts from each subtopic group teach their peers what they know.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Divide students into small group-based number of subtopic segments. ● Instruct students to learn all they can about the subtopic and become experts. ● Reform groups so that they include one expert from each subtopic group. ● Instruct students to share their expertise in the new group. 	<p>Movable Elements</p> <p>Also called create-rotate-critique-revise, Best for problems that must be solved by working together. Small groups organize, sort, categorize items, then rotate round the room viewing and critiquing other groups before returning to their own.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good for introducing a new unit or complex topic. Give each group the same problem to explore and then draw their solutions on whiteboard. ● Emphasize the value of peer-to-peer critique and let student groups revise based on feedback. ● Conclude the session by providing the big reveal and collecting questions.
<p>Newsprint Dialogue</p> <p>Divide the class into small discussion groups. Pose a question, problem, or topic to the class. Each small group will summarize their discussion on a flip chart or whiteboard. Allow members of the class to wander around the room and read all responses.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer prompts to stimulate conversation or debate. ● Students may add comments or questions to other group postings for peer feedback. ● Emphasize different or contrasting views and probe for deeper understanding. ● Conclude by debriefing answers in the larger group. 	<p>Stations</p> <p>An alternative to traditional lectures. Engages students by requiring them to move around the room exploring different topics and learning materials as they exchange ideas with peers, respond to prompts, and formulate their own thoughts.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set up exhibits around the room, including letters, quotes, multimedia presentations, charts, photos, cultural artifacts. ● As student groups rotate through stations, have them complete a worksheet or activity at each station. ● A 'gallery' exhibiting each group's project or research may also be used this way similar to poster sessions.
<p>Affinity Grouping</p> <p>Activity used to break down a topic and classify its parts. May be done with sticky notes, index cards, or certain digital tools. Student groups sort and organize items into categories to identify common themes. Create a heading for each grouping.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can be done with synchronous in-class and online students or assigned as a digital asynchronous activity ● Consider forming groups based on different criteria, perspectives, or time periods ● Useful for understanding stakeholders or product life cycles ● Try other frameworks such as Kanban, brainwriting, design sprint, or reverse brainstorming. 	<p>Whiteboard Work</p> <p>Use to make visible, and share, problem-solving processes. Divide whiteboard into four parts: 1) prerequisite info needed, 2) steps to be followed to the solve problem, 3) narrative of how to solve the problem, and 4) examples of similar problems.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask one student to fill out section 1 on the board. Then, encourage two students to simultaneously complete sections 2 and 3 on the board. Lastly, have another student complete the 4th section. ● Explain the higher order thinking skills involved in problem-solving processes ● Encourage students to use this model when taking notes in class or studying outside of class.

Activities to Enhance Lectures and Clarify Ideas

<p>Turn to a Partner</p> <p>Students are often more comfortable sharing their thoughts with a peer, rather than sharing with the entire class. Have students work with a partner on an assignment or discussion topic before beginning a whole class discussion.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works best when the group has enough background on a subject that they can immediately move to a discussion with their partner without previewing or reviewing concepts. • Walk around the room and listen to conversations. To encourage participation, share quotes heard around the room. (e.g., "Who was it that said/?") 	<p>One Minute Paper</p> <p>Designed to help students check their understanding and share what they know or do not know. Give students a question prompt and ask them to write down their thoughts on paper in their own words, in one minute.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important idea/insight for me was...? • One question I still have right now is...? • The most challenging aspect of today's activity was...? • My personal example that relates to the topic of the day...? • Something that surprised me in today's discussion was...? • Why I disagree with a position taken in today's class...?
<p>K*W*L (What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I Learned)</p> <p>This activity helps students activate prior knowledge about a subject, link it to new information, and make connections between what they know and what they want to know. Have students complete a KWL chart like the example above.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use this to check understanding for particular concepts that students are having difficulty with. • Towards the end of the session go back to the chart and have students correct any info in the K column, and clarify any questions remaining in the W column. • Conclude class by having students complete the L column. 	<p>Grab Bag</p> <p>Write questions, problems, topics for discussion, or other challenges on slips of paper and put them into a hat or bag. Individuals or groups select a slip of paper and discuss the topic, solve the problem, or answer the challenge.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students grab sources and must correctly cite the source using the appropriate style (e.g., APA, MLA) on the board. • Students grab positions/arguments from that position. • Students grab math word problems to solve for the class. • Students grab a vocabulary word and must define it and provide an example to the class.
<p>Informal Quiz</p> <p>Use quizzes to check for understanding and spark discussion. Students can't talk or share answers, but they can refer to their notes or textbook. Follow up with debrief and allow time for students to concur or disagree to encourage discussion.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-7 questions can be on paper or read aloud • Questions should require short multiple-choice answers or short words and phrases • Focus on singular positions or major ideas to be debated. 	<p>Matrices</p> <p>A matrix can be a useful way to organize or categorize information, identify specific characteristics, or understand relationships between items or ideas. Categorizing information is a higher order thinking skill.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use to identify and define new vocabulary words • Use to compare-and-contrast product features • Use to assess levels of risk or make decisions • Use to identify behaviors under specific conditions

Activities to Organize and Apply Concepts

<p>Timeline</p> <p>Begin with a horizontal line representing a time continuum. Add significant events to the timeline relative to other events in that time frame. Mark each point with a date, a brief description of the event, and the significant person(s) involved.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visual representation improves processing of complex material. ● Have small groups construct parts of a whole timeline using whiteboards around the room ● Use a shared document for multiple students to work on together in class or online. ● Locate timeline topics within larger world context 	<p>Concept Mapping</p> <p>This will look like a big spider web on the board when you are finished. Provide a central word, question, or concept and ask students to build out the map by extending related branches that include all subtopics from the main idea.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use whenever students need to explore complexities and see connections between people or ideas ● Practice shifting focus from parts to seeing the whole ● Use maps as a study aid, or to identify missing information ● Use to ask "what if..." questions ● Use to construct stories, characters, activities, or events
<p>Fishbone Map</p> <p>Also known as a cause-and-effect diagram. Can be used to identify multiple causes of a problem, or to explore related problems in greater detail. Diagram interrelated occurrences within and between complex events or phenomena.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start with a problem statement at the tip of the arrow ● Identify causes in different branches off the main arrow ● Dig deeper to understand underlying causes ● Continually ask, "why does this happen?" 	<p>Hierarchies</p> <p>Method of organizing information according to status or authority. Use to illustrate categories and subcategories according to rankings or relationships. Useful for understanding layers of detail and orders of magnitude.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask groups to map out subtopics as part of a larger question or problem ● Help students discern differences between higher-level and lower-level groups with regards to exclusivity ● Deeply consider organizational and social hierarchies
<p>Series of Events Chains</p> <p>Being able to describe event sequencing, or the stages of something, is a critical thinking skill. Useful for detailing life cycles, steps in a linear procedure, unfolding of historical events, or the actions and outcomes of characters in a story.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students may use single words, images, or text to identify parts of the whole process or idea. ● Many students respond well to the idea of storyboarding or creating a comic book. ● Individuals or groups may create parts of a story and combine them into a larger project. 	<p>Bridging Snapshots</p> <p>Combining the skill of sequencing with visual organization can help students articulate ideas or events that develop over time. Illustrate complex processes, step-by-step methods, or show how a series of occurrences lead to a specific outcome.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop visual acuity by showing macro or micro perspectives. ● Draw or find images to represent unfolding events or related concepts. ● Emphasize the skill of deep reading to identify small but important details or differences in images.

Activities to Support Peer-to-Peer Learning

<p>Peer Lessons</p> <p>Select several complex problems or concepts. Divide students into groups assigning one problem per group. Have them work on solutions using textbook, notes, or internet research. Each group prepares a poster or mini lesson to present to class.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use digital technology or whiteboards to organize and show group work or research findings. ● Groups explain the problem in as much detail as possible, including thought processes and methods. ● Higher order thinking skills gained when peers teach each other 	<p>Divide and Conquer</p> <p>A divide and conquer strategy where students teach one another in addition to, or instead of, the instructor lecturing. Helps develop strategies for breaking down and analyzing complex problems, concepts, or ideas.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify a problem or divide complex readings into sections. Assign students to teams. Each team reads, summarizes, and presents the concept to the class, giving examples or demonstrations, and answering questions. ● Encourage students to ask hard questions and correct or complete missing info before debriefing with whole class.
<p>Assigned Discussion Leader</p> <p>Each week, one person in each group is asked to review and summarize material and lead the group discussion by creating question prompts or quiz items for review. The discussion leader role should be rotated between all group members.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Always allow time for individuals leading the discussion to prepare. ● Technique works best when everyone in the group rotates through a series of different roles including fact-checker, note taker, and discussion leader. ● Encourage groups to come up with test or essay questions and include some or all of these on exams. 	<p>Class Chat or Back Channel</p> <p>Social media back channels or digital chat tools are useful ways to get students to ask questions, provide examples, respond to questions, and offer reactions that enhance the lecture giving everyone an equal chance to speak.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some channels allow students to share thoughts and questions anonymously. ● Allow students to ask questions in real time, as they occur to them, not just when the instructor invites them. ● Ask a TA to monitor and answer questions periodically ● Chat can democratize the classroom, but it can also allow a few students to dominate or derail the discussion.
<p>Chalk Talk</p> <p>Write a question in the center of the board (such as: why is Theory A accurate? or what are some examples of A?) Ask some students to come up and write responses, while others draw lines between posts to pose connections or questions.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give students time to form written responses, and then ask a new group to add missing information. ● Encourage dialogue as students discuss ways to group concepts or pose challenges to posts given. ● Instructor draws lines as needed leading whole class discussion about clusters of responses, outliers, what's missing, and what's next. 	<p>Questions from a Critical Friend</p> <p>Developed by Costa and Kallick (1993). A critical friend asks probing questions and offers friendly but honest critiques of a person's work. Critical friends advocate for the success of that person or group.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer examples of helpful and not-helpful comments by modelling desired behaviors in class. ● Teach students to fully understand the situation and outcomes to be achieved ● Works best when the resulting paper or project will be published or shared widely.