

ACTIVE LEARNING

Learning increases when students are involved actively in the learning process. Active learning takes place when

- students interact with the teacher
- students interact with each other
- students interact with learning resources.

The following are some strategies to increase the amount of active learning in a course:

- Shift the focus from covering content to uncovering content. Let students discover information.
- Shift from a session-long lecture to 15-20 minute presentation of one or two new concepts leading to student active learning tasks.
- Present material as incomplete information requiring student input to complete.
- Use short-term problem solving in-class exercises assigned to pairs of students.
- Use simulations.
- Have individual students or pairs prepare and present new material to the rest of the class.
- Let students keep journals for the duration of the course.
- Use case studies enacted (role-played) by students (rather than read silently).
- Use questioning effectively.
- Guide brainstorming sessions to elicit information.
- Let students debate key issues.

Whatever the task, make sure that

- Directions are clearly stated;
- Tasks are small enough to be completed in a relatively short time;
- Expected outcomes are clearly defined;
- Tasks are varied;
- Student pairs or groups are changed frequently;
- Feedback is provided by the teacher;
- Questions cover various levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis and evaluation;
- Tasks are fairly assessed