Activate Your Learners!

Active Learning Strategies for Fostering Participant Engagement in Information Literacy Sessions

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Outline

This session will:

- Discuss the value of including active learning techniques in instruction/programming.

- Present the chart used by our teaching team to individualize instruction.

- Allow you to try out active learning activities.

Active Learning

Active learning refers to a student-centred instruction method which focuses on having students actively participate in the learning process.

Advantages of Active Learning

- Improves:
  - Interest
  - Motivation
  - Involvement
  - Group work dynamics
- Allows students to:
  - Express their ideas/opinions
  - Practice their skills
  - Take responsibility for their own learning
- Recognizes a variety of learning styles
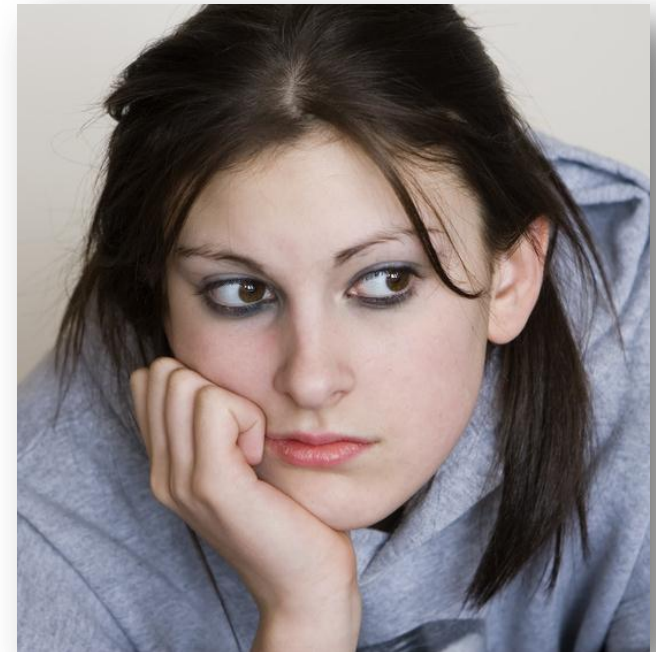
Tips for Active Learning

- Talk informally with students as they arrive for class.
- Expect that students will participate and act accordingly.
- Arrange the classroom to encourage participation including putting chairs in a cluster or circle if appropriate.
- Reduce anonymity by introducing yourself. Ask the class to relate previous library experiences to you.
- Use small group discussion, questioning, and writing to allow for non-threatening methods of student participation.
- Give students time to give responses, do not rush them.
- Reward students for participating by praising them or paraphrasing what they say.
- Draw the students into discussions by showing the relevance of the library to their studies.
- Allow students time to ask questions at the end of class.
- Use humour to add an element of fun to sessions.

(Drueke, 1992)

Goal	Activities	ACRL Standard
Introduction to (or review of) the library and its services	• **Jeopardy** • **Shoot Out** • **Press Conference**	
Identifying alternate synonyms and spellings	• **Taboo** • **Synonym Race**	**2.2.b : Identifies keywords, synonyms and related terms for the information needed**
Applying Boolean Logic	• **Human Booleans** • **Shuffle and Deal** • **Coloured Shapes**	**2.2.d: Constructs a search strategy using appropriate commands for the information retrieval system selected (e.g., Boolean operators, truncation and proximity for search engines)**
Identifying popular/trade/academic articles	• **Sorting Journals** • **Wanted Ad** • **Resource Referee: Journals**	**3.2.a: Examines and compares information from various sources in order to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness and point of view or bias.** **3.2.d: Recognizes the cultural, physical or other context within which the information was created and understands the impact of context on interpreting the information.**
Searching databases	• **Scrimmage** • **Librarian Needs a New Car** • **Resource Referee: Databases**	**2.2.e: Implements the search strategy in various information retrieval systems using different user interfaces and search engines.** **2.3.a: Uses various search systems to retrieve information in a variety of formats.**

Introduction to (or review of) the library and its services	Identifying alternate synonyms and spellings	Applying Boolean Logic	Identifying popular/trade/academic articles	Searching databases
Jeopardy Review of library skills (general library, catalogue, periodicals, databases, etc) using Powerpoint Jeopardy game.	**Taboo** Topic keywords are declared taboo and cannot be used to search. Students brainstorm other terms in pairs or groups.	**Human Booleans** Student clothing or birthdates are used to demonstrate how Boolean operators can be used to narrow or widen a search.	**Sorting Journals** Provided stacks of mixed types of journals are sorted and described by students.	**Scrimmage** Based on discovery principle, students search databases on their topic without receiving instruction and then discuss their methods before the librarian demonstrates.
Shoot Out Students write questions on slips of paper and throw them to the front of the class. Questions are answered at the end of the session, if not covered at the beginning or during the class.	**Synonym Race** Students are placed in teams and given a keyword. Teams then race to come up with the most synonyms.	**Shuffle and Deal** Students are given a playing card, and stand when instructor asks for certain combinations using AND, OR to demonstrate how Boolean operators can be used to narrow or widen a search.	**Wanted Ad** Students write a wanted ad for academic journals, describing their characteristics.	**Librarian Needs a New Car** Students search for an item and discuss different results found via web, CBCA, 1search, catalogue, etc.
Press Conference Coloured cards with library questions are given to students at the beginning of class and answered throughout at timely intervals.		**Coloured Shapes** Premade coloured shapes are given out to students. Students stand when their card is described with AND, OR, NOT to demonstrate how Boolean operators can be used to narrow or widen a search.	**Resource Referee: Journals** Folders are filled with articles that might be found in different types of journals etc. Students are asked to examine contents and comment.	**Resource Referee: Databases** Folders are filled with items that might be found on Google, different databases, etc. Students are asked to examine contents and comment.

Shoot Out & Press Conference Cards

Shuffle and Deal

Sorting Journals?

Resource Referee: Databases

Reflection

What types of active learning activities are you already doing in your sessions?

Of the activities discussed, which could you see yourself using/modifying for your sessions? How?

What potential problems/issues can you foresee with any of these activities?

Questions?

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