

ACTIVE LEARNING

- How to Make your Class More Interactive
- Make Your Classes More Participatory

How to Make your Class More Interactive

Grabbing Students' Attention

- 1. Pose a question and have students brainstorm possible answers*
- 2. Invite student to challenge an idea*

Encouraging Student Participation

- 1. Ask students to elaborate something that they have written in a response paper or on the class' discussion board*
- 2. Have students answer other students' questions*
- 3. Punctuate your lecture with questions*
- 4. Interrupt your lecture with a sample exam question*
- 5. Ask students to interpret a statistic, a graph, a chart, or another visual image*

Varying your Format

- 1. Rather than simply lecturing or asking questions, have your students:*
 - introduce the session
 - stage a debate
 - take part in a role playing exercise
 - hold a mock "press conference" or interview
- 2. Integrate a case study or an inquiry or a problem solving exercise into your class*
- 3. Integrate student presentations into your class*

Varying your Questions and Responses

- 1. Instead of simply asking questions that involve recall or definitions or opinions, also ask questions that involve higher-order thinking skills:*

- ***Diagnostic questions:***

How would you interpret or explain this?

- ***Challenge questions:***

Why do you believe that? What's your evidence?

- ***Role Playing questions:***

What would you do in _____'s shoes?

- ***Evaluation questions:***

How do you evaluate so-and-so's actions?

- ***Prediction questions:***

What do you predict would be the consequence of this? What inferences can we make?

- ***Generalizing questions:***

Are there any generalizations that we can formulate?

2. Respond to students in multiple ways that demonstrate that you take their ideas seriously:

- ***Paraphrase:***

Restate the student's comment, or considering writing an abbreviated version on the blackboard

- ***Re-frame:***

Restate the student's comment in terms of concepts or theories used in the class

- ***Respond:***

Describe your reaction to the student's points

- ***Correct:***

In a non-threatening manner, correct any mistakes or misinformation

- ***Challenge:***

Ask the student to elaborate or clarify or provide evidence to justify a statement

- ***Converse:***

Begin a dialogue with the student

- ***Involve other students:***

Ask other students what they think

Keeping Your Class Lively

- 1. Have students write potential questions for an upcoming quiz or test*
- 2. Have a small group of students solve a problem and explain their reasoning*
- 3. Poll your students*

Ending With a Bang

- 1. Ask your students to summarize the main points that they learned in class that day and the points they found most confusing.*
- 2. Ask the students to explain the relevance, utility, or significance of the information presented in the class.*

Make Your Classes More Participatory

- 1. Get off to a fast start: Pose a question or a problem.*

Then brainstorm, eliciting a variety of responses from your students. Or ask the students to write down possible answers or discuss possibilities in a small group.

- 2. Invite students to challenge an idea or perspective that you present.*
- 3. If a student asks a question, see if someone else in the class will offer an answer.*
- 4. Insert “pregnant pauses” into your class.*

You might, for example, provide students with a sample examination question based on the material you have been discussing, then ask the students how they would answer the question.

- 5. Vary your approach*

In addition to lecture and discussion, consider including debates or role playing activities or case studies in your class.

- 6. Use discussion “triggers”*

A visual image, a simulation, a film clip, an audio excerpt, or a quotation is an effective way to stimulate discussion.

- 7. Let your students provide closure*

Ask the students to summarize the main points made during the session, either orally or in writing.