

Five Ways Active Learning Is Easier Than Lecture

Many have trepidation about making the switch from traditional lecture-based direct instruction to active learning. One concern is the difficulty of preparation, organization, and facilitation of such activities. Here are five ways active learning can be easier than traditional formats.

1. **Gain Insight into Materials' Effectiveness.** Contrary to the general belief, you CAN lecture during active learning activities. Active learning encourages classroom interaction, and one way to facilitate this is to use question-and-answer strategies throughout your lectures. You may also choose to use Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATS) designed to quickly and formatively assess student understanding. These activities and more can be used to inform revisions or reviews where needed.

2. **Students Teach Each Other (*with your guidance*).** Many active learning strategies are designed around students or groups doing research, educating each other about their findings, and applying it in various performance- or case-based activities. Instead of the lecturer, you become the expert in the room, providing consultations and advice from your experience in the field.



3. **Students Also Grade Each Other (*with your guidance*).** If groupwork or partnering strategies are used, peer review can be employed through the use of rubrics or checklists. Your grading load is lighter when students have already graded each other's work and made revisions accordingly. With the completed peer reviews in hand, your job may become simply to look for red flags, rather than carefully inspecting each section.

4. **Students Hold Each Other Accountable.** In a traditional classroom, professors often must hold students accountable for studying and preparation. In active learning, students must rely on each other. Peer pressure becomes a powerful motivational tool when group members notice that one member is not contributing enough, potentially bringing down the group grade. This is reflected in peer evaluations (3).

5. **Grade Ten Groups Instead of Eighty Individuals.** The use of strategies such as group work and peer review may, in some circumstances, take the place of individualized grading. Automatically graded online quizzes such as an Individual Readiness Assessment Test (IRAT) can be used to gauge individual knowledge. The rest of the student's assessment may consist of peer reviews and group- or partner projects.

Interested in learning more? Reach out to SMHS Education Resources instructional designers (777-4272).