Assessing Active Learning: An Outcomes-Based Primer

Active learning activities are successful because they encourage students to problem-solve, practice metacognitive strategies, and interact with the material in meaningful ways. We know that active learning strategies increase students' knowledge retention at assessment time and beyond. But how do we ASSESS active learning? It depends on the intended outcome.

If The Outcome Is ….	And Students Achieve it By…	Then You can Assess it With…
Intellectual or Conceptual Knowledge	Study outside of class; Lecture (recorded or live); Team-based learning	iRAT & gRAT Exams Polling tools
Application of Intellectual or Conceptual knowledge	Projects, team-based learning, flipped strategies	Rubric Peer Assessment (using rubric)
A Motor Skill	Roleplays, demonstrations, simulations, labs, clinical encounters	Rubric Performance-checklist
An Attitude	Projects, team-based learning, flipped strategies, role-plays, simulations, clinical encounters	Rubric Frequency-based checklist Peer Assessment (using rubric);

Definitions

iRAT & gRAT – Individual-Readiness Assurance Test and Group-Readiness Assurance Test. Given before or at the beginning of class to measure individual knowledge or group knowledge, respectively.

Exams – Any traditional written or online test of knowledge. May include multiple-choice, short-answer, labeling, essay, matching, or other question types.

Polling Tools – Students use clickers, smartphones, tablets, or computers to answer questions. Results are displayed on a slide or website. Can be used for summative or formative assessment.

Rubric – A leveled table or chart designed to break down complex activities into measurable components that can be evaluated individually for efficient and unbiased grading.

Checklist – A list of measurable components, skills, or markers. While a rubric is leveled, checklists are usually Yes/No (pass-fail).
- o *Performance checklists* log the completion of each step a student must perform to demonstrate mastery. Assigned points denote mastery.
- o *Frequency-based checklists* measure how often a student chooses to do, say, or complete identified tasks. A certain frequency or infrequency level denotes mastery.

Peer Assessment – Pairs or groups of students use assessment tools (such as rubrics or checklists) to grade each other's performance. This can be done in addition to, or in lieu of the instructor's assessment (depending on the activity).

More information about each assessment tool and activity is available on the Education Resources website. In some cases, examples and templates are available.

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