

Designing Active Learning Activities

There are numerous types of face-to-face, blended, and online activities that engage students and allow them to apply their knowledge. We have drafted a list of some popular active learning strategies below that we hope you can draw inspiration from. Do not let the descriptions of each strategy box you in - allow these strategies to inform and transform the work you are already doing. Figure out how a strategy can work for **you**, not the other way around.

Role Playing Activities

- Role playing activities have the instructor assign/offer a student (or groups of students) a role, then provide them with a goal to work toward.
- [More information and examples of role playing activities.](#)

Jigsaw Projects

- This 10-step process has instructors start class by splitting up students into diverse groups. Each group member is asked to learn a certain segment of the days lesson, then teach the segment they learned to the rest of their group. A brief quiz is given at the end of class to ensure that students take the activity seriously and learned what they were supposed to.
- [More information about the 10 steps and examples of jigsaw activities.](#)

Hands-on Activities

- It is often said that hands-on is minds-on. This type of activity has students perform a real-life task related to the lesson you are teaching. These activities can vary greatly from discipline to discipline and are most commonly seen in labs and clinical work.
- [More information and examples of hands-on activities.](#)

Guided Analysis

- Guided analysis activities step learners through the process of analyzing a complex situation. They answer one of the most important questions ever asked: "So what?"
- [More information and examples of guided analysis activities.](#)

Virtual/In-Person Simulations

- This type of activity puts students in the driver's seat. They are given the chance to practice a skill they have learned in a safe, controlled environment.
- [More information and examples of virtual/in-person simulations.](#)

Case Studies

- Case studies have been around for a long time and are used in a variety of disciplines. These activities place students in a real-world situation and allow them to discover and abstract information from the experience.
- [More information and examples of case studies.](#)

Minute papers: Checking in with Students

- At the end of the week/lesson, you can ask each student to answer a brief assignment question that summarizes what they learned for the week and identifies any remaining questions they may have. Your quick review of this feedback allows you to see if overall the students understood the main points of your lesson and, if not, adjust your course material appropriately. Because emails are private, and surveys are anonymous, individual students often feel it is safe to let you know that they did not understand some aspect/s of the lesson. Tufts University provides a useful overview of [how to use minute papers](#).

Knowledge Surveys

- Another way to check in with students and know if they are grasping the course content is through knowledge surveys. These are brief surveys that ask students to reflect on their understanding of the course material. You can provide a knowledge survey at the beginning of class and then have students re-complete the survey at the end of the semester to gauge how the students think they learned.