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Original Article

# IMPACT OF ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

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**ABSTRACT**

This study is an attempt to discuss the impact of active learning strategies to enhance student performance. Education is an integral part of every human being. It moulds him to be a good citizen, who is really an asset of the country. "The wealth of a nation depends on the education of its citizens". Teachers have a noble role in imparting knowledge to the innumerable members in a society. Ever wonder why students pay their tuition and fees, purchase expensive textbooks, rearrange their work schedules and personal lives to enroll in classes, attend classes for short or long periods of time and then suddenly drop the class or simply stop attending? This perplexing question probably has festered in the minds of many college professors those of us who are committed to imparting wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to help shape the minds of our students. Certainly a multitude of reasons could account for the sudden disappearance of our students, who seemingly are plucked away one at a time. The school teachers, to capture the minds, evoke the interest, and enhance the motivation of those students; obviously there are many answers to this timeless question. One answer, however, lies in the content of this paper employing active learning strategies in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Active Learning Strategies, Think-Pair-Share and Collaborative Learning

## INTRODUCTION

Ever wonder why students pay their tuition and fees, purchase expensive textbooks, rearrange their work schedules and personal lives to enroll in classes, attend classes for short or long periods of time and then suddenly drop the class or simply stop attending? This perplexing question probably has festered in the minds of many college professors those of us who are committed to imparting wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to help shape the minds of our students. Certainly a multitude of reasons could account for the sudden disappearance of our students, who seemingly are plucked away one at a time [1]. A few examples include: work related demands, family matters, health reasons, financial pressures, relocations, and changes in their work schedules. Of course there are many other factors that also contribute to student withdrawal rates most of which are outside the control of the teacher [2]. But what about that small percentage of students who quietly disappear from our classes because they are bored, lost, unchallenged, or simply unmotivated to continue with the class? What can we do, as school teachers, to capture the minds, evoke the interest, and enhance the motivation of those students? Obviously there are many answers to this timeless question. One answer, however, lies in the content of this paper: employing active learning strategies in the classroom.

### Activities of ALS

In my view, an active learning suggested learners work in pairs, discuss materials while role-playing, debate, engage in case study, take part in cooperative learning, or produce short written exercises, etc. The argument is when active learning should be used during learning [4]. The following activities are included in active learning system (ALS)

### Class Discussion

A class discussion may be held in person or in an online environment. Discussions can be conducted with any class size, although it is typically more effective in smaller group settings [5]. This environment allows for instructor guidance of the learning experience. Discussion requires the learners to think critically on the subject matter and use logic to evaluate their and others' positions. As learners are expected to discuss material constructively and intelligently, a discussion is a good follow-up activity given the unit has been sufficiently covered already.

### Think-Pair-Share

A think-pair-share activity is when learners take a minute to ponder the previous lesson, later to discuss it with one or more of their peers, finally to share it with the class as part of a formal discussion. It is during this formal discussion that the instructor should clarify misconceptions [6]. However students need a background in the subject matter to converse in a meaningful way. Therefore a "think-pair-share" exercise is useful in situations where learners can identify and relate what they already know to others. So preparation is key. Prepare learners with sound instruction before expecting them to discuss it on their own.

### Learning Cell

A learning cell is an effective way for a pair of students to study and learn together. A learning cell is a process of learning where two students alternate asking and answering questions on commonly read materials. To prepare for the assignment, the students will read the assignment and write down questions that they have about the reading. At the next class meeting, the teacher will randomly put the students in pairs. The process begins by designating one student from each group to begin by asking one of their questions to the other. Once the two students discuss the question. The other student will ask a question and they will alternate accordingly [7]. During this time, the teacher is going around the class from group to group giving feedback and answering questions. This system is also referred to as a student dyad.

### Short Written Exercise

A short written exercise that is often used is the "one minute paper." This is a good way to review materials and provide feedback. However a "one minute paper" does not take one minute and for students to concisely summarize it is suggested that they have at least 10 minutes to work on this exercise.

### Collaborative Learning Group

A collaborative learning group is a successful way to learn different

material for different classes. It is where you assign students in groups of 3-6 people and they are given an assignment or task to work on together [8]. This assignment could be either to answer a question to present to the entire class or a project. Make sure that the students in the group choose a leader and a note-taker to keep them on track with the process. This is a good example of active learning because it causes the students to review the work that is being required at an earlier time to participate.

**Student Debate**

A student debate is an active way for students to learn because they allow students the chance to take a position and gather information to support their view and explain it to others. These debates not only give the student a chance to participate in a fun activity but it also lets them gain some experience with giving a verbal presentation

**Reaction To A Video**

A reaction to a video is also an example of active learning because most students love to watch movies. The video helps the student to understand what they are learning at the time in an alternative presentation mode. Make sure that the video relates to the topic that they are studying at the moment [2]. Try to include a few questions before you start the video so they will pay more attention and notice where to focus at during the video. After the video is complete divide the students either into groups or pairs so that they may discuss what they learned and write a review or reaction to the movie.

**Class Game**

A class game is also considered an energetic way to learn because it not only helps the students to review the course material before a big exam but it helps them to enjoy learning about a topic. Different games such as word puzzles and crossword puzzles always seem to get the students minds going.

**Ten Benefits of Using ALS**

1. Students are more likely to access their own prior knowledge, which is a key to learning.
2. Students are more likely to find personally meaningful problem solutions or interpretations.
3. Students receive more frequent and more immediate feedback.
4. The need to produce forces learners to retrieve information from memory rather than simply recognizing a correct statement.
5. Students increase their self-confidence and self-reliance.
6. For most learners, it is more motivating to be active than passive.
7. A task that you have done yourself or as part of a group is more highly valued.
8. Student conceptions of knowledge change, which in turn has implications for cognitive development.
9. Students who work together on active learning tasks learn to work with other people of different backgrounds and attitudes.
10. Students learn strategies for learning itself by observing others.

**Characteristics of ALS**

Some of the major characteristics associated with active learning strategies include:

1. Students are involved in more than passive listening
2. Students are engaged in activities (e.g., reading, discussing, writing)
3. There is less emphasis placed on information transmission and greater emphasis placed on developing student skills
4. There is greater emphasis placed on the exploration of attitudes and values
5. Student motivation is increased (especially for adult learners)
6. Students can receive immediate feedback from their instructor

**Students are involved in higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)**

**Risks for Using ALS**

There are two types of risks in using ALS

1. There are risks that students will not:

- participate actively
- learn sufficient course content
- use higher order thinking skills
- enjoy the experience

2. There are risks that you as a faculty member will not:

- feel in control of the class
- feel self-confident
- possess the needed skills
- be viewed by others as teaching in an established fashion

**Obstacles or Barriers and Remedial Measures for Using ALS**

Six commonly mentioned obstacles to using active learning strategies include:

**(i) you cannot cover as much course content in the time available**

Admittedly, the use of active learning strategies reduces the amount of available lecture time that can be devoted to content coverage. Faculty who regularly use active learning strategies typically find other ways to ensure that students learn assigned course content (e.g., using reading and writing assignments, through their classroom examinations, etc.)

**(ii) Devising active learning strategies takes too much pre-class preparation**

The amount of pre-class preparation time needed to implement active learning strategies will be greater than that needed to "recycle old lectures;" it will not necessarily take any more time than that needed to create thorough and thoughtful new lectures.

**(iii) Large class sizes prevent implementation of active learning strategies**

Large class size may restrict the use of certain active learning strategies (e.g., it is difficult to involve all students in discussion in groups larger than 40) but certainly not all. For example, large classes can be divided into small groups for discussion activities, writing assignments can be read and critiqued by students instead of the instructor, etc..

**(iv) Most instructors think of themselves as being good lecturers**

Most instructors see themselves as good lecturers and therefore see no reason to change. Though lecturing is potentially a useful means of transmitting information, teaching does not equal learning; this can be seen clearly in the painful disparity between what we think we have effectively taught, and what students indicate they have learned on the examination papers that we grade.

**(v) There is a lack of materials or equipment needed to support active learning approaches**

The lack of materials or equipment needed to support active learning can be a barrier to the use of some active learning strategies but certainly not all. For example, asking students to summarize in writing the material they have read or to form pairs to evaluate statements or assertions does not require any equipment.

**(vi) Students resist non-lecture approaches**

Students resist non-lecturing approaches because active learning alternatives provide a sharp contrast to the very familiar passive listening role to which they have become accustomed. With explicit instruction in how to actively participate and learn in less-traditional modes, students soon come to favor the new approaches.

**CONCLUSION**

Successful and effective teaching requires two basic things. The teacher should be competent to teach the subject allotted to him at the same time, he should follow good techniques of teaching to make the learning fruitful. The learner can attain the goal. Teachers have

to concentrate not only on gifted children but also on the slow learners. By identifying each groups, they can plan their learning strategy accordingly. There is a tendency among teachers to blame the students for their poor performance in learning. We can successfully overcome each of the major obstacles or barriers to the use of active learning strategies, and reduce the possibility of failure, by gradually incorporating teaching strategies that increase student activity level and instructor risk into your regular teaching style.

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