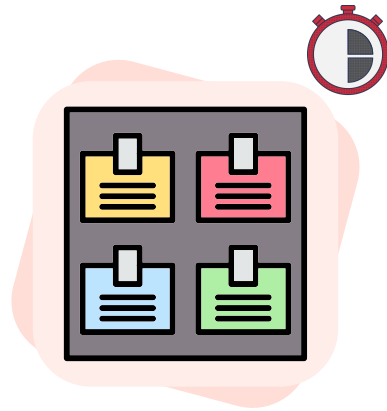




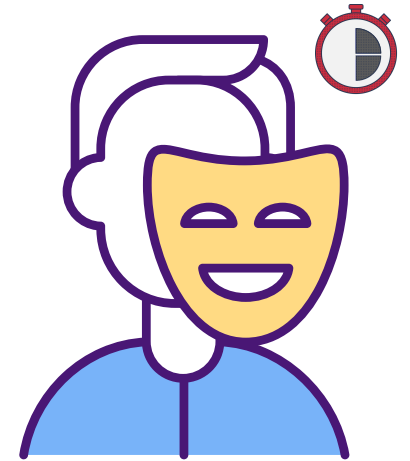
Think-Pair-Share



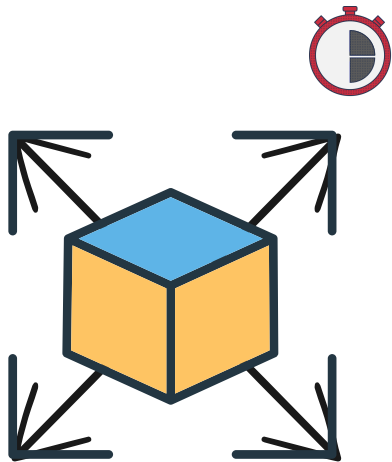
Gallery Walk



Muddiest Point



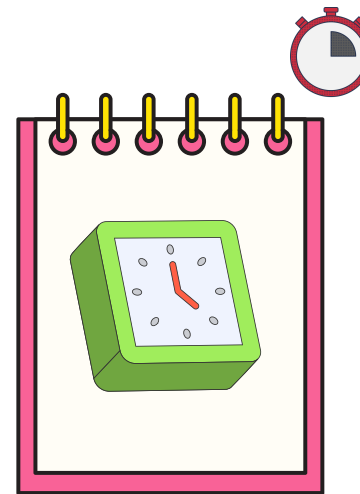
Role-Playing



Four Corners



Dot-ocracy



Minute Paper



Emergency Response

Role-Playing

Ask students to imagine themselves as stakeholders or concerned parties in a dilemma. They will then speak from that person's viewpoint rather than their own.

TIP: This can take many forms: group discussions, presentations, writing assignments, reflections, simulations, etc.

Muddiest Point

At the end of a class, week, or unit, have students identify the one thing they found the most difficult or confusing. This allows you to assess what is working and what needs more time in your lessons.

TIP: Some educators use this as an "Exit poll" where students complete this at the end of the class. It can also be used to take attendance.

Gallery Walk

Provide students with a question that requires brainstorming or asking additional questions. Instruct them to write ideas on post-its. Have students then post these on the wall under pre-assigned themes. They can walk around the room and discuss.

TIP: You can also use this to assess what concerns or knowledge-gaps students have.

Think-Pair-Share

Students first consider a prompt individually, then discuss their ideas with a partner before sharing with the larger group. This structure promotes broad participation and allows students to refine their thinking through peer discussion.

TIP: Ask complex questions or address complicated ideas.

OPTION: Add a writing component.

Emergency Response

Explain a potential crisis in the field and assign students roles as first responders or problem-solvers. They must collaborate and brainstorm ways they could, as a group, resolve or lessen the crisis.

TIP: Role-play this as if the crisis is happening in real time so students need to act quickly.

Minute Paper

Stop class early and have students write for one or two minutes to answer the question "What was the most important thing you learned in class today?"

TIP: This provides a low-stakes way for you to assess knowledge retention and identify any gaps in intended outcomes.

Option: Discuss answers or ideas in the next class session.

Dot-ocracy

Have students anonymously vote on ideas or solutions by placing dot stickers next to answers posted on a wall.

TIP: This provides a visual representation of the class's ideas to discuss as a group.

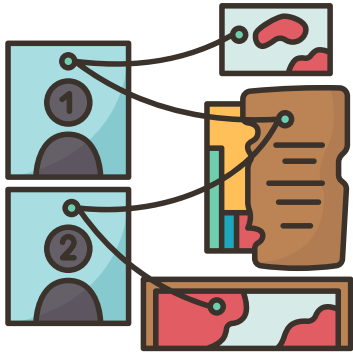
OPTION: You can use small signs that say "Yes" or "No" instead and have students raise them where others cannot see.

Four Corners

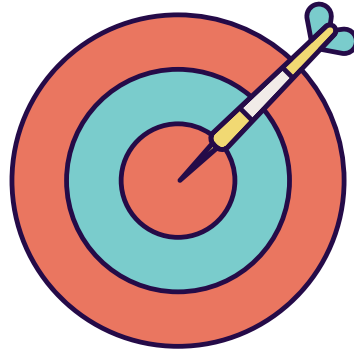
Ask multiple choice questions and have students stand in the corner that represents their answer. Students then discuss with others why they chose their answer.

TIP: You can have students write down their answers first, so they don't simply follow the crowd.

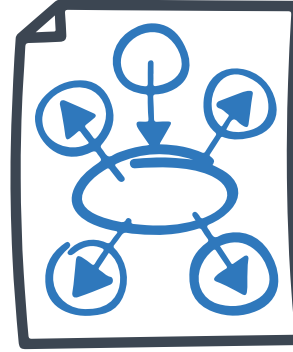
OPTION: Challenge students to win others over to their corner.



Case Study



Relevance Cards



Concept Map



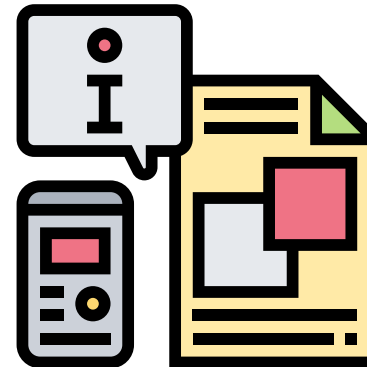
World Cafe



No Bad Questions



Worst-Case Scenario



Visual Syllabus



Student Teacher

World Cafe

Designate different tables (or breakout rooms) for a specific topic and have an “expert” ready to create discussion. Students then rotate to each topic table for small space of time while the expert helps them brainstorm and/or discuss. At the end, groups share out what they learned together and compare to other groups.

TIP: Have whiteboard or paper for each group to write on.

Concept Map

Have students use the whiteboard, paper, or any type of collaborative space to visually map out relationships, contexts, and important considerations for a topic. Students collaborate to process the information and see connections.

TIP: This can also be done via online whiteboards for synchronous or asynchronous classes.

Relevance Cards

At the end of a lesson, have students write (on notecards, in a discussion board, or through a journal entry) one real-life application of your lesson's topic. Ask them to be logical, creative, etc. Read these and, for the next class, highlight some that are valid, creative, and well explained.

TIP: If you're worried about time, limit student responses to only one relevant example. If they cannot decide, have them pick the “best”.

Case Study

Present a real-life issue and ask students how they might respond. In pairs, groups, or individually, discuss the pros and cons of various resolutions.

TIP: This is very similar to Role-Play, Worst-Case Scenario, and Emergency Response. but this is a real situation rather than hypothetical. They respond from their own point of view and expertise rather than someone else's.

Student Teacher

Ask students to teach a section, concept, or important historical event to the class. Make these short but focused presentations backed up with research.

TIP: This can also be a great ice breaker; you can ask each student to take five minutes to teach the class something of which they consider themselves an expert.

Visual Syllabus

Have students (in groups or individually) create a one-page visual “cheat sheet” for the syllabus that highlights the most important dates, requirements, links, and grades for the class. This allows students to process the syllabus in a way that shows its relevancy and emphasizes the expectations of the course.

Worst-Case Scenario

Ask the students to imagine the worst-case scenario if a professional in this field was unaware of key concepts. Once students decide what could go wrong, have them brainstorm ways to prevent this.

OPTION: Instead of worst-case scenarios, you could also use this for discipline-based fears or ethical dilemmas.

No Bad Questions

Have a discussion in which students can only answer each other in questions. This increases critical thinking while addressing difficult materials.

TIP: You may need to demonstrate this to students beforehand so they understand.

OPTION: You can also use an AI chatbot to simulate this if you like. For instance, Blackboard has an option for this.

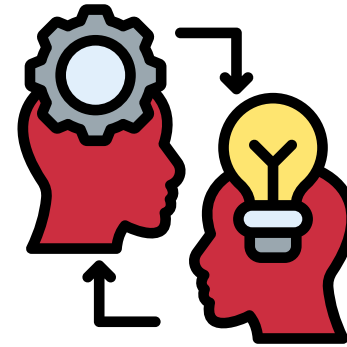
Instant Activity Deck

Quick Ideas for
Active Learning Exercises

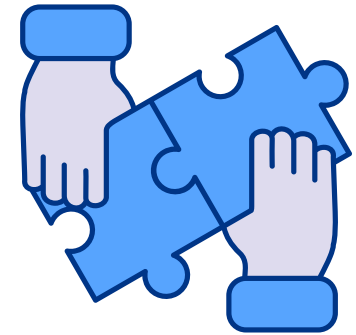
 **Center for Teaching Excellence**
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Considerations:

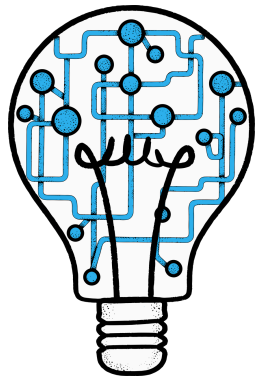
- Longer activities often take prep. **Plan ahead** when possible.
- **Online?** No problem! Many of these can be adapted for synchronous or asynchronous courses. Ask CTE how!
- Remember to check **accessibility**. Is the activity suited for everyone in your class? Does it need to be modified so all students can participate?
- While technology is everywhere, do not assume all students have the access to these tools. Prioritize **free services available** through the university.



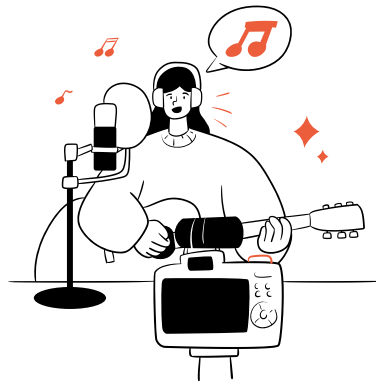
Passing Problems



Share the Work



AI Critic



Media Response

Basic Supplies You Might Want on Hand

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| • Post-It Notes | • Dot Stickers |
| • Sharpies | • Index Cards |
| • Dry Erase Markers | • Pens/ Pencils |
| • Blank Paper | • Whiteboard |
| | • Stop Watch |

If you are interested in ideas on game-based active learning, CTE is developing a lending library of resources. Contact cte@mailbox.sc.edu for info.



Virtual Reality Experience

Share the Work

Divide up the lesson into multiple pieces and assign one to each student/group. Give students 15 minutes to read and process the information, then have them present the materials to the class.

TIP: End the class by filling in any information they may have missed, or provide a summary of why the information is relevant/important.

Passing Problems

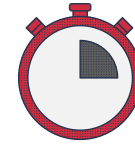
Break a problem/ issue/ topic into as many parts as you have groups. Assign each group an aspect of it to solve and/or discuss. Gather together to discuss ways each group accomplished their task.

TIP: You can also have groups pair up after they've completed their section and check one another's work.

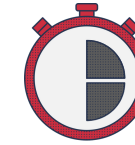
Why Active Learning?

- Promotes student engagement
- Encourages critical thinking
- Builds a sense of community
- Leverages student knowledge and experiences
- Demonstrates relevancy of course content

Time Recommended for the Activity



5-15 minutes



15-30 minutes



30-60+ minutes

Virtual Reality Experience

Use VR headsets to help students change their perspectives. Whether underwater or space exploration, sports training, empathy exercises, or museum visits, VR provides immersion beyond what the classroom can offer.

TIP: CTE can bring headsets to your classroom and help during the session. Contact cte@mailbox.sc.edu for info.

Active Learning at CTE

For more ideas, workshops, and handouts, check out our website: sc.edu/cte

EXCITE

Active Learning Initiative



EXPLORATION



CREATIVITY



IMMERSION



TECHNOLOGY



ENGAGEMENT

Media Response

Rather than a paper, exam, or essay, have students create their own responses using video or audio. They can create a podcast, a Tik Tok video, or infographic.

TIP: Students have a lot of these capabilities on their phones, but do not assume everyone has access. See what programs or services are offered for free through the university.

AI Critic

Provide students with a project or materials that AI generated.

This could be a solution, a portfolio, or an ethical outcome. Have students (individually or in a group) explain the problems of what AI produced, as well as benefits of what AI suggested.

TIP: You can also have students write or discuss alternative answers or options that AI missed.