

Use this document to help you imagine active learning methods you think would be appropriate towards assisting participants learn about your content. As you develop ideas, write them down, and think them through, consult with an Instructional Designer to help you architect and innovate approaches to the application of the listed methods. Remember too, there are more that can be pulled from an applied!

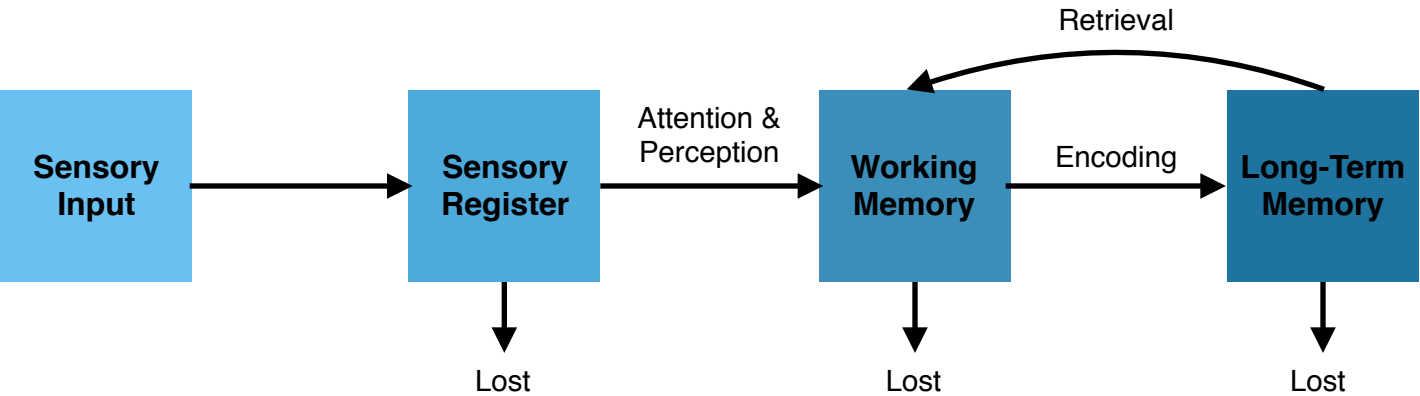
“Learning is not a spectator sport. Student learning is optimized when students are actively involved in their own learning. Students must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experience, and apply it in their own lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.”

-- Adapted from Chickering and Gamson (2003)



1 - INFORMATION PROCESSING [How Human Memory Works]

Cognitive psychology assumes that (1) cognitive processes influence learning, (2) people must be active in their learning, (3) meaning is constructed by the learner, (4) people are selective with what they learn, and (5) prior knowledge influences learning. For a person to learn, gaining and holding ATTENTION, along with ACTIVITY using new information is essential. In addition, practice, reflection time, and the context of how the information was learned and initially used reinforces long-term memory effectiveness.



2 - WHAT IS ACTIVE LEARNING?

Active learning is a kind of learning that involves deliberate effort by a participant to engage in cognitive processes and/or physical activities that involve connecting prior knowledge with incoming information, and as a result constructing new meaning. Learning participants who are actively involved in engagement of learning content and tasks, take part in activities such as the following:

- * Speaking and Thinking about their words;
- * Listening and Processing what they are hearing;
- * Writing and Conceptualizing what they want to say;
- * Reading and Processing mental imagery and meanings; and
- * Reflecting on connections both new and old with knowledge and skills.

In short, the learner is not a consumer of incoming information, but instead a participant in the activity of constructing new knowledge by way of utilizing their prior knowledge with incoming information in ways that allow for the comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of their learning.

3a - ACTIVE LEARNING METHODS for ONLINE LEARNING CONTEXTS

CASE STUDY

Strongly support active learning through content engagement, discussions with peers, and problem-solving. If using more than one, be sure that each has a clear connection to the intent of the course.

CONCEPT MAPPING (DIAGRAMMING)

Not all learners find this useful, however done with clear concepts and instruction it can offer individuals some insight into how ideas are connecting in their minds, as well as a group, differences in perspectives.

DATA ANALYSIS

This is particularly useful for helping participants to begin working with and manipulating data. However, key to this is to scaffold the activity and even document the processes they need to know to do it correctly.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Used in an organized and directed way, this can highly support active learning among all participants because of the opportunities it allows for the sharing of multiple perspectives, experience, problems, and the opportunities it allows for building a community of learners.

PROBLEM-SOLVING

The provision of a problem is a good point from which to spark learning engagement. Problems offer a place from which to explore a range of other active learning methods and support knowledge construction.

3b - ACTIVE LEARNING METHODS for ONLINE LEARNING CONTEXTS

RESEARCH REPORT

May best support active learning when done in conjunction with a project that spans the duration of the course. Think in terms of having learners continually work with new information to understand how it fits into a larger image.

ROLE PLAYING

Can support active learning by having participants think in terms of multiple perspectives. Such may involve discussion, writing arguments and positions, and conceptualizing new information with concern for a broad range of factors.

SIMULATION

This connects with experiential and situated learning. The idea is to place the learner in a context of utilizing the new information in a realistic scenario. Such may be accomplished through a creative story plus activity instructional video, use of an interactive animation, and computer program.

VIDEO + NOTE-TAKING

Imagine possibilities for having a participants become more than simply viewers of a video. This may involve having a continuous video in which the participants are provided material to guide their viewing and understanding. This may also involve structured pauses/breaks in the video for them to do a task or reflect.