Active Learning Strategies

Components of good active learning activities are the same, whether presented in traditional or in online environments.

Activities should:

1) have a definite beginning and ending
2) have a clear purpose or objective
3) contain complete and understandable directions
4) have a feedback mechanism and
5) include a description of the technology or tool being used in the exercise

(Mantyla, 1999, p.83).
ACTIVITY NAME: Gallery Walk

Description:

Students work on specific sections of a topic or project and post along a wall or around a room. Presentation of ideas represented and interpretation can be made by the working group. The larger group (whole class), staying in their specific groups, walk around the room and add ideas, thoughts, suggestions etc. in a different colour ink. Large class debrief can be made at the end.

Materials: Chart paper, coloured markers, tape, sticky notes for highlights.

Time: Variable depending on the depth of inquiry and the number of students.

Debrief: Depending on the learning outcomes of the task. Learners can record answers to specific questions probed.

Additional Information: Can be modified for on-line learners accordingly.

Suitable for: Individual Work □ Pairs □ Small Group □ Large Group □

ACTIVITY NAME: Pictorial Collage

Description:

Students are given a task through group work. Ideas, concepts, are to be represented pictorially and then explained to the larger group.

Materials: Chart paper, white board, markers, sticky notes, old magazines for cutouts if required.

Time: 15 - 20 mins. Depending on class size and task requirements.

Debrief: Relative to task learning outcomes.

Additional Information: Cut outs from magazines can be done ahead of time with specific pictures that tells a story of the concepts being explored.

Suitable for: Individual Work □ Pairs □ Small Group □ Large Group □
**ACTIVITY NAME:** Chart or Columnar Representations

**Description:**

3 or 4 perspectives of a topic can be critically analyzed and synthesized by creating columns or a chart. Students can work through each topic singularly and then synthesize ideas for presentation. This can be done ahead of class time in preparation for a more in-depth discussion during class.

**Materials:** A printed sheet of paper with chart or columns as a worksheet.

**Time:** Depending on when used - if individually, students can spend as much time at home. As a class activity it may be necessary to tailor to lesson plan timings.

**Debrief:** Based on the learning outcomes of the task - and whether the end goal is analysis, synthesis or evaluation of the material.

**Additional Information:**

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**ACTIVITY NAME:** T-Chart

**Description:**

Create a page with a T-chart. Concepts are placed on the left of the vertical line and students responses on the right. Specific instructions should be included regarding the depth of responses.

**Materials:** Printed page with chart already done.

**Time:** If done individually at home - unlimited. Class time will be determined by the facilitator based on lesson plan timings.

**Debrief:** Sharing of ideas as a large group or small groups can distill main points to share with the larger group.

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**ACTIVITY NAME:** Pair and Share

**Description:**

Class can be asked to pair up with someone (preferably across the room for cross pollination of ideas) and discuss an idea, concept, topic, thought, etc. Discussion time should be determined based on class activity and task learning outcomes.

**Materials:** Note paper or white board if students are standing around the room.

**Time:** TBD (to be determined by facilitator)

**Debrief:** Pull out core points relative to task expectations.

**Additional Information:**

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**ACTIVITY NAME:** Mind Map

**Description:**

Students are asked to plot their thoughts and ideas about the topic in either a sequential map or a random graphic representation that others can follow. At times it may be necessary to relate certain ideas to a main topic then branch off to another topic and show relativity of points that contribute to the topic. Whole chapters of the text can be mind-mapped to make meaning.

**Materials:** Paper, pen, pencils, as required.

**Time:** If done ahead of class time - unlimited. If done as a class activity - time should be allocated based on lesson plan.

**Debrief:** Focus should be on the learning outcomes for the task. Students share their maps and their personal interpretations. Questions can be entertained and explanations given.

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**ACTIVITY NAME:** The Melting Pot

**Description:**

Class to form small groups or people they have possibly never worked with before. They are free to discuss anything relative to the coursework - their frustrations, challenges, expectations etc. Groups should set up some limitations e.g. no bashing of other students, facilitator, or course. Only personal challenges they are facing at this point of the course. They should be allowed the flexibility of recording their responses into categories e.g. Challenges, Successes, To be accomplished, or I still have to do. Alternatively, they can have a relaxed unstructured discussion.

**Materials:** Paper, pen

**Time:** As determined by the facilitator.

**Debrief:** Facilitator to determine how sharing would take place e.g. categories or open forum.

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**ACTIVITY NAME:** Peer Review

**Description:**

*Step 1* - Peer reviews can be done with any topic. Students can be asked to individually respond to a single topic on paper, or an idea, a thought, or a section of chapter or a whole chapter. This could be random responses or targeted responses, where answers are expected under a certain train of thought, or specific parameters determined by the facilitator.

*Step 2* - Students are asked to share with a partner - and either add to their work or make suggestions for improvement of thoughts and ideas or suggested further interpretations.

*Step 3* - students can determine what feedback from the partner can be incorporated into their responses.

*Step 4* - Short presentations made to class.

**Materials:** Paper and pen

**Time:** TBD by facilitator
Debrief: Facilitator to elicit responses from pairs relative to content expectations and learning outcomes of the activity.

Additional Information: Specific points taken from chapter readings could be pulled out and highlighted in order for students to compare interpretations.

Suitable for:   Individual Work  □   Pairs  □   Small Group  □   Large Group  □

ACTIVITY NAME: 4 Corners

Description:
Class is divided into 4 groups. Chart paper is already placed in the 4 corners of the room ahead of time with a heading or a question to be discussed. Selection of groups should be planned ahead of time for optimum cohesion of ideas – those who are strong on the topic being discussed as well as those who may be having some challenges with the topic. Post names beside the chart paper ahead of class time. Alternatively names for groups can be put on the overhead screen to eliminate unnecessary classroom movement. Students represent responses textually or graphically as determined by the facilitator.

Materials: Chart paper, markers, tape

Time: TBD by the facilitator - if additional components are added e.g. analysis or synthesis of ideas this activity should be broken up into several time frames with little debriefs after each section. If extended to evaluation - a printed criteria sheet should be provided for use.

Debrief: Student presentations, facilitator tie in to main points expected from the responses relative to course materials covered.

Additional Information: 4 corners can be combined with the gallery walk for a deeper interpretation of points. It can also be used in a third round as an evaluation tool with some given criteria or critical screens for groups to examine.

Suitable for:   Individual Work  □   Pairs  □   Small Group  □   Large Group  □
ACTIVITY NAME: Talking Stick

Description:

Based on Native American Tradition, the talking stick activity requires learners to talk about a topic for a specific time frame while in a circle. This gives full attention on the speaker and does not allow anyone else to be talking at the same time. Facilitator can use a small stick or a pencil and start the process modeling the process of what is to be shared in the circle - the purpose of someone holding the speaking time is important. The stick is passed to the next person in the circle and goes around and back to the facilitator. Everyone gets a turn. This activity is very versatile as it can be used as an icebreaker - e.g. answering a random question, or an answer to a question summarizing part of the class (just before break) or a final summary of the whole session - Things I taking away from this class.

Materials: Stick or pencil.

Time: TBD

Debrief: Facilitator to tie into the Learning Outcomes of the task based on the motive for this activity.

Additional Information: Most effective when done in a circle. This activity can also be used as a transformative strategy if questions are posed for that purpose e.g. asking questions about change in thought processes on a topic.

Suitable for: Individual Work ☐ Pairs ☐ Small Group ☐ Large Group ☐

TBD - to be determined

ACTIVITY NAME: One minute paper

Description:

The facilitator can determine where in the session the learners would benefit from writing down their thoughts on paper. This very short activity can be used to record thoughts about a topic at the beginning of the session, the middle, or the culmination of several concepts coming together or as a summary of the session. Students are asked to write for a minute (realistically 3-5 mins.). They can submit with no names on their sheets of paper. Or with their names if they would like their responses back at the next class. This gives the facilitator an opportunity to determine how learners are making interpretations of concepts, if they are following content, missing some areas or not making the required connections.
Materials: Pen and paper or prepared colourful sheets in different shapes and sizes (for a touch of flare) done up by the facilitator.

Time: TBD

Debrief: If all responses are collected the facilitator should give some feedback at the next session.

Additional Information:

Suitable for:  
- Individual Work  
- Pairs  
- Small Group  
- Large Group

ACTIVITY NAME: Start, Stop, Continue

Description:

A sectioned sheet of paper can be used for a start, stop and continue activity.

Students will make their responses under each heading recording what they would like to start happen in class, what should be stopped and what should be continued.

Materials: Pen and Paper

Time: TBD

Debrief: Facilitator can collate all responses under the 3 categories and pass on in class at the next session or show on the projector screen.

Additional Information: Students have an opportunity to see the collective expectations of the class. Whereas 2 people may not like group-work, all the others may enjoy working in groups. Therefore, this activity provides an opportunity for students to self-adjust. Responses can also be done on 3 X 5 cards and shared with class so they get to see all responses.

Suitable for:  
- Individual Work  
- Pairs  
- Small Group  
- Large Group
**ACTIVITY NAME:** Reconnect, Connect, and Project

**Description:**

This activity can become multi-faceted. The Facilitator can construct a 3 column sheet with the above headings - one already in Course ADED4F93 package. Questions eliciting specific information can be written at the top of each column. E.g. for *Reconnect* - if the facilitator needs to know what bits of information was important to the student from the last session, a question can be crafted to bring out responses itemizing the main points. In the middle section - *Connect*, students can be asked to make connections of the present material to the past concepts. The last column *Project*, students can record their insights on the combination of the past and present and make connections to the content of the following session. If they have not read the following session materials the facilitator can alert them to some areas of interest which may provide some motivations for reading and researching the content pieces to come.

**Materials:** Activity sheet and pens or pencils.

**Debrief:** Can be shared in *pair and share*, *small groups* or in a *large group* discussion.

**Additional Information:** Can be modified to focus on specific concepts.

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**ACTIVITY NAME:** Comparison Chart (Session 10)

**Description:**

On the whiteboard or chart paper create a Chart with 2 columns. Get a volunteer in the class to identify their 2 countries under study (individual worksheets provided in course materials - requiring students to do as homework). They should have their research materials handy for easy reference. In the left column record categories as itemized in the marking schematic for Assignment 3 - History, Economy, Population, Political System, Educational Institutions Structure etc. Have the learner volunteer information that can be recorded under both countries and then do some comparisons. Discuss implications for adult education based on those categories. Have class input, on each of the categories and probe for observations based on the several theories covered, e.g. developmental - Marxist, Capitalist, Torres non-formal education, Freire `s work. etc.
**Materials:** Chart paper or whiteboard, markers, tape.

**Time:** TBD

**Debrief:** Get learners responses on how helpful this comparison was for their personal projects.

**Additional Information:** For time saving purposes the facilitator may want to have each student create a worksheet and have it done at home and bring to class for discussion or sharing. However, doing this micro level work collectively does have far reaching benefits.

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**ACTIVITY NAME:** Case Study

**Description:**

A case study can take an in-depth look at how learners respond to a particular situation in a designed context. The case and the boundaries should be defined as a classroom learning activity. If an issue has been identified, the requirements may be to examine what are the contributors to the issue or issues under a particular heading. Example poverty in a country - what are the contributors and how can education address some of the solutions or vise versa the examination of the aspects of poverty that contribute to the lack of education for the disadvantaged. This issue can then be looked at through several designed screens i.e. politics, foreign aid, or internal corruption. What becomes quite interesting is that the research and the student may see things differently and therefore conceive the case differently. These are some of the interesting debates that can arise from case studies and falls under Dewey`s concept of a situation that evokes inquiry.

**Process:**

1. Identify the main Issues
2. Investigate - make personal inquiry relative to content and course expectations
3. Align with curricular goals and create interpretations based on facts form text and research
4. Discuss relative to the provided screens - i.e. politics, geography, education
5. Reflect and discuss implications, challenges, outcomes as perceived from research
6. Make conclusions based on material covered.
Materials: Course content, research materials, classroom discussions, personal interpretations.

Time: If done as a classroom activity - the facilitator and class can determine time frames.

Debrief: Based on activity learning outcomes or answers to specific questions posed in course content.

Additional Information: Case studies for this course is already presented in the text.

Suitable for: Individual Work ☐ Pairs ☐ Small Group ☐ Large Group ☐

_______________________________________________________________

Please add to the list any additional ones we have not done in this Course.

ACTIVITY NAME:

Description:

Materials:

Time:

Debrief:

Additional Information:

Suitable for: Individual Work ☐ Pairs ☐ Small Group ☐ Large Group ☐
Please add to the list any additional ones we have not done in this Course.

**ACTIVITY NAME:**

Description:

Materials:

Time:

Debrief:

Additional Information:

Suitable for:   Individual Work □   Pairs □
                Small Group □   Large Group □

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**ACTIVITY NAME:**

Description:

Materials:

Time:

Debrief:

Additional Information:

Suitable for:   Individual Work □   Pairs □
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