TESOL Spain 39ᵗʰ Annual National Convention, March 11-13, 2016
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A Common Scenario...

It's the third week of your first semester teaching at a new university. You have dedicated a lot of time to planning your lessons, and you believe you are doing what you can to promote a student-centered learning environment. But so far, things have not been going so well. One day, midway through your intermediate-level integrated skills EAP class, you take a look around and notice the following: Some students are talking amongst themselves about an unrelated topic in their L1; other students are frantically texting on their cell phones and giggling; one student appears to be sleeping; and still other students appear to be working on homework for their engineering class. Several other students appear to be engaged in the communicative task you have set (the same students who always ask questions, readily participate, and often stay for a bit after class to talk with you in English).

What is Active Learning?

Learning is "active" when students are obliged to think critically in order to complete tasks, take responsibility for their own learning, engage personally in their work, and maintain accountability for their participation in class. Active learning is often contrasted with "traditional" classrooms, in which teachers lecture and students typically play a passive role.

Strategies for Promoting Active Learning

- Keep students accountable
- Use engaging materials
- Involve students personally
- Account for academic socialization
- Give students choices

- Require critical thinking
- Foster classroom community
- Monitor teacher talk
- Reflect, collect, and respond
- Make learning fun!

Examples of Active Learning Activities

- Think-pair-share
- Jigsaws
- Peer review
- HW mini-quizzes
- Ticket out

- Role-plays
- Fluency lines
- Running dictations
- Murder mystery
- Fish bowl

- Games
- Case studies
- Group analysis
- Round tables
- Annotation

Resources, Examples, & Further Reading on Active Learning

Assessment & Teaching of 21st Century Skills (ATC21S) (2012). 21st century skills: www.atc21s.org

Cornell University Center for Teaching Excellence: goo.gl/UAOORr

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Resources, Examples, & Further Reading on Active Learning (continued)

CSULA's "Active Learning for the College Classroom": goo.gl/cQ07ns

Flipped Learning Network: www.flippedlearning.org/FLN

"Round Tables" Activity (Online PowerPoint): goo.gl/RT7BHb

University of Michigan's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT): goo.gl/UZmLA3

"40 Active Learning Strategies for Active Students": goo.gl/SqZGfe

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