

## Distance Learning Material

### ACTIVE LEARNING

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In order to optimize life-long learning and potential success it is now widely accepted that young people need to have opportunities to develop personal capabilities and effective thinking skills as part of their well-rounded education.

For many teachers there is always more to do and they are always striving to find ways of doing it better – the area of effective learning and teaching is certainly no exception.

It is important that you take the time to ask yourself:

- Where are you now in terms of your learning and teaching practice?
- What is your motivation behind integrating active learning and teaching methods into your existing classroom practice?
- How can you build on your existing practice?
- What do you hope to achieve?

By using active learning methodologies, it is hoped that pupils will not only come to a deeper understanding of the issues involved, but also that their motivation and enthusiasm will be heightened. You may wish to think about the following points in order to increase pupils' motivation while adopting a teaching strategy and activity:

- Is the activity age-appropriate?
- Are pupils completely aware of the aims and objectives?
- Are there opportunities for pupils themselves to facilitate the activity?
- Will everybody have an equal chance to participate in the activity?
- Is there enough variety?

### The Role of the Teacher

There is a shift from a teacher-centred model to a learner-centred approach to learning and teaching. There is also a shift from product-driven learning to process-driven.

<b>From:</b>	<b>To:</b>
Teacher-centred classroom	Learner-centred classroom
Product-centred learning	Process-centred learning
Teacher as a 'transmitter of knowledge'	Teacher as an organiser of knowledge
Teacher as a 'doer' for children	Teachers as an 'enabler', facilitating pupils in their learning
Subject-specific focus	Holistic learning focus

These changes in the role of the teacher will inevitably result in transforming the role of pupils in the classroom.

<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
Being passive recipients of knowledge	Active and participatory learners
Focus on answering questions	Asking questions
Being 'spoon fed'	Taking responsibility for their own learning - reflective learners
Competing with one another	Collaborating in their learning
Wanting to have their own say	Actively listening to opinions of others
Learners of individual subjects	Connecting their learning

It is very pertinent to make note of student's strengths. You may find that most students fall into more than two categories-

Intelligence Area	Is Strong in	Likes to	Learns Best Through	Famous Example	Common Misbehaviors
Verbal/Linguistic	Reading, writing, telling story, memorizing date, thinking in words	Read, write, tell stories, talk, memorize, do word puzzles	Reading, hearing, seeing words, speaking, writing; discussions	T.S. Eliot, Abraham Lincoln, Maya Angelou	Passing notes, reading during lessons
Logical/Mathematical	Math, reasoning, logic, problem solving, patterns	Solve problems, question, reason, work with numbers, experiment, use computers	Working with patterns and relationship, classifying, abstract thinking	Albert Einstein, John Dewey	Working on math or building things during lessons
Visual/Spatial	Reading, maps, charts, drawing, puzzles, imagining things, visualization	Design, draw, build, daydream, look at picture	Working with pictures and colours, visualizing, drawing	Pablo Picasso, Frank Lloyd Wright, George O'Keefe	Doodling, drawing, day dreaming
Bodily/Kinesthetic	Athletics, dancing, acting, crafts, using tools	Play sports, dance, move around, touch & talk, use body language	Touching, moving, processing, knowledge through bodily sensations	Charlie Chaplin, Michael Jordan, Martha Graham	Fidgeting, wandering around the room
Musical/Rhythmic	Singing, picking up sounds, remembering melodies, rhythms	Sing, hum, play on instrument, listen to music	Rhythm, melody, singing, listening to music & melodies	Leonard Bernstein, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Tapping pencil or feet
Interpersonal/Social	Understanding people, leading, organizing, communicating, resolving conflicts,	Have friends, talk to people, join groups	Sharing, comparing, relating, interviewing, cooperating	Mohandas Gandhi, Ronald Reagan, Mother Teresa	Talking passing notes
Intrapersonal/Introspective	Understanding self, recognizing strengths, setting goals	Work alone, reflect, pursue interests	Working alone, self-paced projects, reflecting	Eleanor Roosevelt, Sigmund Freud, Thomas Merton	Conflicting with others

On the basis of research and experiences of educators it has been established that various instructional methods have varied impact on learning

5% learning takes place through LECTURE

10% learning takes place through READING

20% learning takes place through AUDIO VISUAL

30% learning takes place through DEMONSTRATION

50% learning takes place through GROUP DISCUSSION

75% learning takes place through PRACTICE BY DOING

90% learning takes place through TEACHING OTHERS/IMMEDIATE USE OF LEARNING

To ensure maximum involvement of the learners in the process of learning following may be suitably adapted –

#### Active Teaching Methods Out of School

- Surveys
- Market research
- Questionnaire design
- Observing locality
- Visits  
Institutions  
Exhibitions  
Work places  
Cultural  
Trade fairs
- Activity Centre – finding routes, looking for evidence e.g. looking for Irish signs in an area/audio taped tours
- Visual recording
  - map reading
  - Library
  - Planning trips
- Competitions
- Practical work
- Using equipment

#### Active Teaching Methods in School

- Group projects
- Questionnaires
- School library
- Collage
- Practical work
- Experimentation
- Brainstorming
- Group discussion
- Role play
- Sharing your own experiences
- Case studies
- Group work
- Tarsia Puzzle
- Cross word puzzle
- Individual students – class presentation
- Card sorting
- Video clips followed by set of questions
- Use of ICT

**T**eaching is a challenge that stimulates a teacher throughout their careers. The best teachers are those who are always trying to become better.

Successful teaching is not a hit –or–miss proposition dependent on the right bag of tricks. There is a real “science of teaching” to guide our actions and decisions and a growing knowledge base gathered from practical wisdom of experienced teachers. We DO know various factors contributing to effective practice. We can say some practices are more effective than others in certain situations with certain students. Teaching, as other professions, relies on the judgments and commitment of its individual practitioners. Therein lies the “art of teaching”.

Dear educators, you really matter! You are the most important factor in school learning. Your teaching is a unique product- the result of your individual endeavors. Protect it, nourish it, think about it, and give it room to grow. Good teachers do not just happen; they are the product of the highest of personal motivation.

Best wishes, educators. May your ongoing journey towards professional excellence be rewarding and filled with happy times.