Teaching &
Learning
Centre

Card set

Active Learning in the Classroom

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Learn more about TLC and the didactic theme active learning

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About this card set

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This Active Learning in the Classroom card set suggests new techniques to use in your classes. This set was developed and published by the UvA Teaching & Learning Centres (TLC), a network of 7 faculty teams and a central team within the University of Amsterdam. Our mission is to inspire excellence in teaching at the UvA. To achieve this, the TLC supports UvA educators in educational innovation and professional development.

The TLC encourages the use of these activities because they promote active learning, resulting in improved outcomes and fostering an enjoyable learning environment for students. This card set aims to help you achieve this, and is designed for both experienced and new instructors. It offers a range of active learning activities that can be implemented in a variety of educational contexts. The card set includes a collection of tried-and-tested activities suggested by teachers and teacher trainers from various UvA faculties, the Institute for Inter-disciplinary Studies (IIS) and the UvA academic degree in Primary Education.

More info about TLC and active learning?

tlc.uva.nl | tlc.uva.nl/activelearning

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Teaching & Learning Centre

The aim of this card set is to inspire you to use new activities in your course or class.

The goal is not to prescribe a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather to provide a wide-ranging overview of activities so you can choose the ones that best suit your teaching.

The activities fall into 6 categories, based on your didactic goal:

1. **Getting to know your students**
2. **Activating prior knowledge**
3. **Critical thinking & problem solving skills**
4. **Discussion**
5. **Collaboration**
6. **Evaluation & closing**

The bottom of each card shows how long it takes to prepare the activity, how many students it is suitable for, and the cognitive level it is aimed at (Bloom's taxonomy).

Preparation time   **Group size**   **Cognitive level**

Contents

Overview of activities per category

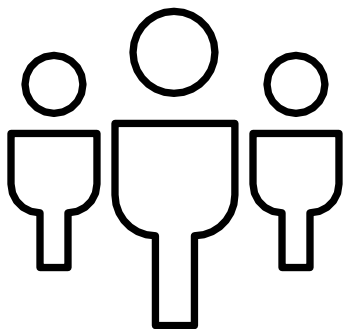**Teaching & Learning Centre**

Getting to know your students

Getting to know your students

A. I'm probably the only one

B. Story of your name

C. A picture says more than 1,000 words
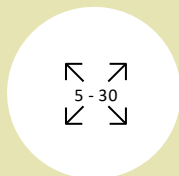
D. The handshake

E. Mirror, mirror on the wall

I'm probably
the only one

Preparation time

Minimal preparation

Group size

5 - 30

I'm probably the only one

Materials	**Time**
Enough space to walk around.	10 - 20 minutes.

Activity
Students get to know each other through their unique experiences.

Description
Everyone walks quietly through the room until one student shouts: "I'm probably the only one who …". Then the other students find a place to stand that reflects how they relate to the statement.

For example:
The students are walking around, and student X shouts: "I'm probably the only one who studied in Asia". Next, students who have also studied in Asia can stand next to student X. Then, students who have studied abroad but not in Asia, for example, can stand a few meters away. The less a statement applies, the further away the student should stand. As a teacher you can ask a number of clarifying questions to help the activity along. Next, everyone walks around again until another student shouts out a statement.

Why does this activity work?
All the students are given the opportunity to say something (original) about themselves, and all the students are involved in each statement because they have to relate to it. Physically walking around also creates a more dynamic atmosphere than a standard round of introductions.

Tips
If the group is not too large you can require all students to shout out a statement at least once.

Story of your name

Preparation time

Minimal preparation

Group size

5 - 30
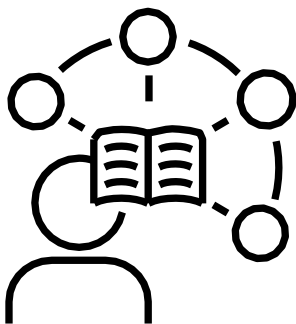
Story of your name

Materials
Enough space to walk around.

Time
5 + 3 minutes per student.

Activity
Students learn the background and context of each other's names.

Description
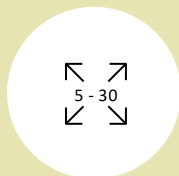Each person in the group takes 5 minutes to think of 'the story of their name.' As the facilitator of this exercise, you can provide some questions/ suggestions to get them started. For example: Nickname? Who chose it? Pronunciation? (Dis)advantages? Meaning? Common? After 5 minutes each student has 3 minutes to present their story. They are free to include anything they like which they deem relevant for their story.

Why does this activity work?
The exercise provides room for diversity and invites people to explain their name. Names can be culturally dependent, and this exercise makes it easier to share these characteristics. It's also an effective way to quickly remember everyone's name.

Tips
You can introduce this exercise with conversation rules such as gestures to 'show love' or relate to what someone is saying.

A picture says more than a 1,000 words

Preparation time

Minimal preparation

Group size

All
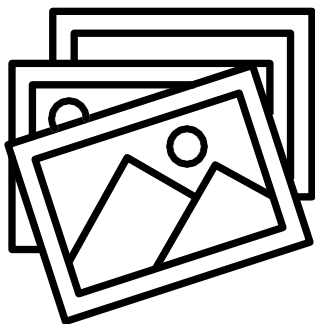
A picture says more than a 1,000 words

Materials
Photo collage.

Time
10 minutes.

Activity
Students introduce themselves using a photo chosen from a collage.

Description
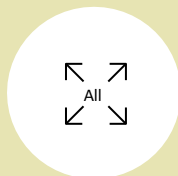You show a photo collage to your students and ask everyone: 'Choose the photo from the collage that you think suits you best and explain why.' Give the students a few minutes to do this and then they can take turns to give their answer. You can also ask 'Who chose this photo and why?.'

Why does this activity work?
This is a nice introductory method because students tend to come up with more original ideas than in a standard introduction round. Since they align themselves with a certain picture, students tend to open up more, which can lead to valuable exchanges.

Tips
Instead of creating a photo collage yourself, you can also ask students to find a picture online.
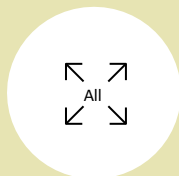
The handshake

Preparation time

Minimal preparation

Group size

All

The handshake

Materials
None.

Time
5 - 15 minutes.

Activity
Students introduce themselves using five questions.

Description
Students introduce themselves using five questions that are linked to their five fingers:

1. Thumb:
   What are you good at?
2. Index finger:
   What are your goals, where do you want to go?
3. Middle finger:
   What do you hate, what do you want to get rid of?
4. Ring finger:
   What are you faithful to?
5. Little finger:
   *What makes you vulnerable, what are you insecure about?*

Why does this activity work?
It forces students to not only mention their interests, but also open up and share more vulnerable information.

Tips
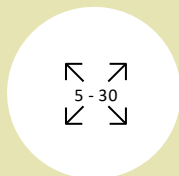Depending on the time, you can have students introduce themselves in pairs or to the whole class.

Mirror, mirror on the wall

Preparation time

Minimal preparation

Group size

5 - 30
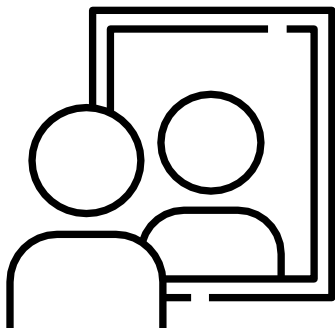
Mirror, mirror on the wall

Materials
None.

Time
15 minutes.

Activity
Students bond by mirroring each other's movements without talking.

Description
Students make 2 rows facing each other, so that each student stands opposite another student. Very important: this is a nonverbal activity and the students must stay in the same place. The goal is very simple: mirror each other.

Round 1: Mirroring facial expressions. Ask one row to make facial expressions. They can only move their face. The other row has to copy as well as they can. After a while you can switch.

Round 2: Now one row also uses their arms. One row starts first, and you can switch after a while.

Round 3: Now students can use their whole body. One row starts first, and you can switch after a while.

Round 4: This round is about synchronizing movements. Students can move everything but they have to try to stay in sync, so students must take turns leading and following.

Why does this activity work?
It turns out that this nonverbal activity has a positive influence on students' subsequent collaboration. This works better than in verbal introductory activities, because in this activity each student gets to see what it's like to lead or follow.

Tips
Ask students afterwards what they thought of the activity and why they think they had to do it. It's best to do this with a relatively small group (max. 20 students).
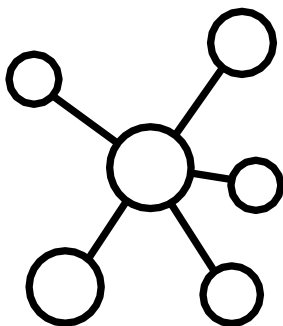
Activating prior knowledge

Activating prior knowledge

The reversed mind map

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Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Some preparation	5 - 30	Understanding

The reversed mind map

Materials
A completed mind map.

Time
10 - 15 minutes.

Activity
Students use a completed mind map to retrieve
prior knowledge.

Description
Creating a mind map is a good way to activate prior knowledge. When introducing a new concept you can ask students to create their own mind map. Alternatively, you can reverse this process by creating a completed mind map yourself (with the main topic and any relevant concepts and sub-topics).

Next, you ask students to review the mind map and mark any topics or concepts they do not fully understand or still have questions about. These can then serve as a topic for plenary or group discussions.

Why does this activity work?
Students get the opportunity to highlight concepts that are unclear for them. They will be more likely to ask questions as they feel it's not a problem if they don't know something. The completed mind map also provides a good overview for students.

Tips
This method works well during the first lecture (using concepts from previous courses), or when preparing for the exam. You can have students discuss together first, in pairs or groups.

Confident, Curious, Recall
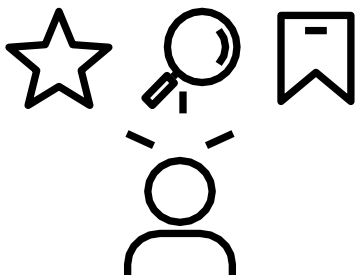
© UvA Teaching & Learning Centres (TLC)

Preparation time

Minimal preparation

Group size

All

Cognitive level

Understanding

Confident, Curious, Recall

| **Materials** None. | **Time** 5 - 10 minutes. |

Activity
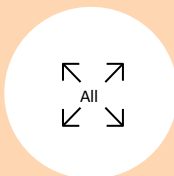Students write down what they are confident and curious about for a given topic. At the end, they add what they have learned.

Description
When introducing a new topic or concept, ask students to write down three words: **Confident, Curious, Recall**. Then ask students to write down their response to the first two terms. What do they already know about the topic: what are they confident about? What are they curious about: what are they hoping to learn? Then at the end of the lecture, you ask the students to respond to the last term. What will they recall, after today?
The students write down what they remember from the lecture.

Why does this activity work?
It's easy to apply and requires students to reflect on prior knowledge. Besides, it encourages curiosity, as the students actively consider what they would like to learn. This helps students process new information during the lecture.

Tips
You can also let students exchange notes or create a note together. You can also collect their input (for example by using Wooclap). This way you immediately gain insight in what students already know and what they are curious about.

Quote minus one

Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Some preparation	All	Understanding

Quote minus one

Materials	**Time**
A relevant quote.	5 - 10 minutes.

Activity
Students fill in the blanks in a quote you provide.

Description
Provide a quote that is relevant to your topic, but leave out a crucial word and ask students what the missing word might be. For example:

"I cannot forecast to you the action of _____; it is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma."
Or:
"The end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge _____
For in all the states of created beings capable of law, where there is no law, there is no _____."

Students now have to come up with the missing word(s) in the quote.

Why does this activity work?
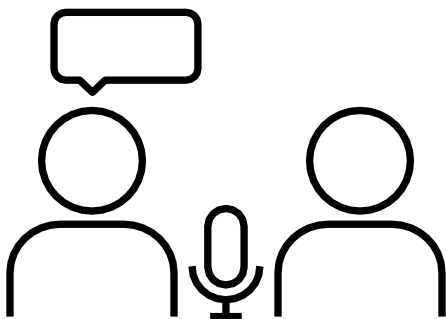This exercise quickly engages students' interest in a topic. It creates curiosity and encourages them to think actively about the quote in relation to the wider topic you are discussing.

Tips
Make sure that all students get enough time to think about the missing word: don't allow them to answer immediately as some might already know the quote. You can also use Wooclap for this activity.
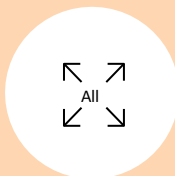
The interview

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Preparation time	**Group size**	**Cognitive level**
Minimal preparation	All	Understanding

The interview

Materials
None.

Time
10 minutes.

Activity
Students interview each other about their prior knowledge of a new topic.

Description
When introducing a new topic or concept, have the students form pairs and interview each other. They can choose set roles (interviewer and interviewee) or they can take turns asking each other questions. What do they already know about this specific topic and how did they gain this knowledge? What are they hoping to learn, do they have a certain opinion about it? Etcetera.
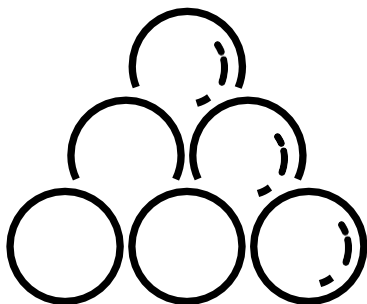
Why does this activity work?
Students usually find this activity a bit uncomfortable at first, but once they get started, they enjoy it, and more importantly, it often turns out that they know more about a certain topic then they initially thought.

Tips
You can also extend this activity if you want. Give the students around 20 to 30 minutes to prepare. Student A (the interviewer) has to prepare a list of detailed questions and student B (the interviewee) has to gather as much knowledge as possible on the topic in order to be able answer the questions. The students then conduct the interview and see if the interviewee can answer the questions.
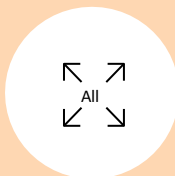
Snowballs

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Preparation time	**Group size**	**Cognitive level**
Minimal preparation	All	Understanding

Snowballs

Materials
Crumpled piece(s) of paper.

Time
5 - 10 minutes.

Activity
A quick game of associative thinking
to activate prior knowledge.

Description

When introducing a new topic, crumple up a few pieces of blank paper and throw them through the classroom. Each time a 'snowball' lands on a desk, the students must write down one thing they already know about the topic. Now the students throw the balls to someone else, who also writes down something they already know about the topic, avoiding any duplication.

This can go on for several rounds before you take a break. You can now ask students to discuss the snowball insights in groups, or you can collect them and discuss the most interesting comments together.

Why does this activity work?

Using this activity means your classroom may become rather chaotic, with balled up paper flying around. All this fun encourages students to exchange knowledge playfully.

Tips

This method also works at the end of a lecture. Have students write down their takeaways from the lecture. You can also crumple up one piece of paper and throw it to a student. Instead of asking them to write something down, have them tell the group something they know about the topic before throwing it to the next student.
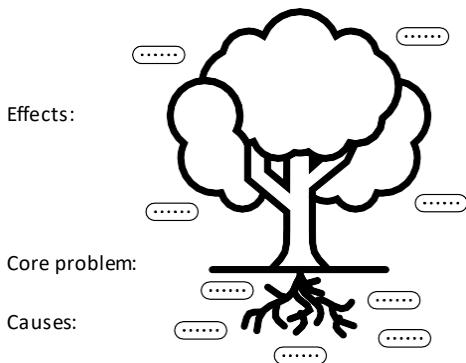
Critical thinking & problem solving skills
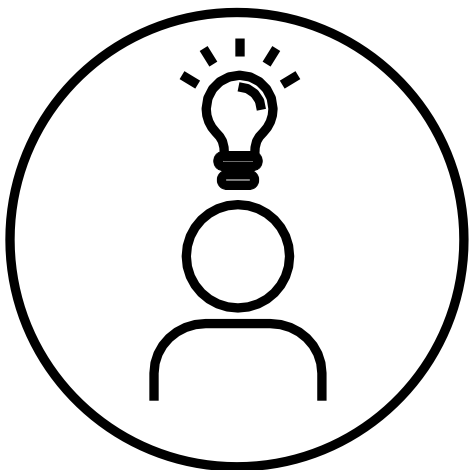
Critical thinking & problem solving skills

Issue tree

Effects:

Core problem:

Causes:

Preparation time

Some preparation

Group size

5 - 30

Cognitive level

Analyzing

Issue tree

Materials:	**Time**
An illustration of a tree.	30 minutes.

Activity

Students systematically analyze a problem and diagnose it or find a solution.

Description

Step 1:

Explain why issue trees can help structure and analyze complex problems.
  - You split a complex issue into sub-questions, which are easier to solve.
  - Doing this reduces the complexity of the problem because it is easier to
    see which sub-problems need to be worked on to solve the main problem.
  - By drawing an issue tree with your group, you create a common
    understanding of the main problem within a team, resulting in a shared
    vision.
  - The issue tree shows the missing elements for answering the main
    question or solving the main problem.

Step 2:

Explain how to start drawing an issue tree.
  1. Start with the core problem.
  2. Then students have to write down all causes related to the problem.
  3. Then students write down all the effects related to the problem.

Step 3:

Now students write down all causes and effects and formulate an answer.

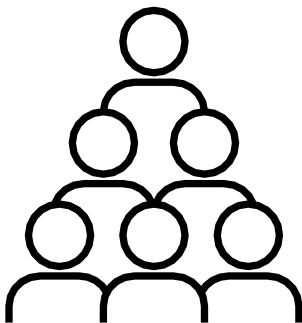## Why does this activity work?

By drawing an issue tree, students learn to split complex problems into
sub-problems. It illustrates all the major elements of a problem and can
help students prioritize elements.

Tips

This method is also suitable as a homework assignment.

6 honest people

Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Some preparation	5 - 30	Analyzing

6 honest people

Materials	Time
None.	30 minutes.

Activity
Students analyze a problem using guiding questions.

Description
Step 1: Students collect information based on the guiding questions below:
1. Who is involved? Who can help solve the problem?
2. What is the problem? What has already been done or tried? What does a certain theory say about the problem?
3. When does it take place? When did it first occur?
4. Where does the problem occur (location and/or part of process)? Are there other situations where it also occurs?
5. Why should this problem be solved? Why hasn't the problem been solved yet? Why is it a problem?
6. How do stakeholders view this problem? How would discipline X view this problem? How do people deal with this problem?

Step 2: Have students structure their answers to the questions above. Ask them to create a schematic overview of the problem. As they do this, they must prioritize the answers: What is important? Which aspect carries more weight in determining the solution? What patterns do we see?
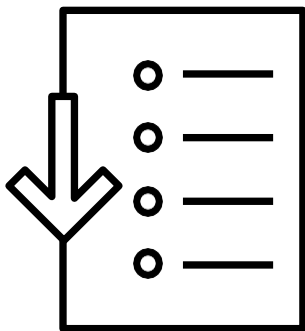
Why does this activity work?
Students explore a problem or challenge and unravel various issues related to the problem together in a structured way.

Tips
Divide the task by giving each student one of the questions to answer. This way students need each other to create a complete analysis.
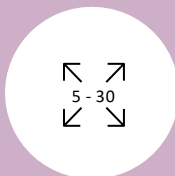
Text puzzle

Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Some preparation	5 - 30	Analyzing

Text puzzle

Needed material
Reading material cut up
into sections.

Time
15 minutes.

Activity
Students place parts of a text in the right order.

Description
Give students a text with the paragraphs in random order. In groups,
the students have 10 minutes to determine the correct order of the text.
Afterwards, discuss the results together.

Why does this activity work?
Students need to read the text in detail and decide what the key point of
every paragraph is. They have to think deeply about the structure of the text,
which enhances their retention of the key points in each paragraph.

In addition, students usually like this exercise as it's a bit different. It also
encourages curiosity to read the whole paper.

Tips
It goes without saying that you should choose a text that is
relevant for the class in question. Make sure the paper is
suitable for this exercise and decide on a logical way to cut up
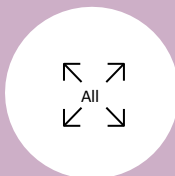the text. You can also let students read the paper in advance.

Practice exam questions
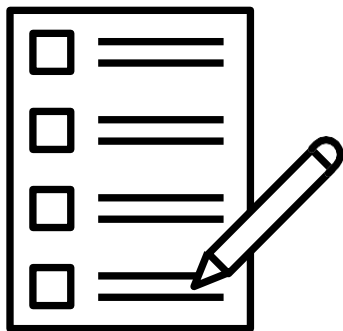
Preparation time

Some preparation

Group size

All

Cognitive level

Creating

Practice exam questions

Materials
The learning outcomes for the course.

Time
30 - 40 minutes.

Activity
Students create their own practice exam questions with answers.

Description
Have students write practice exam questions. Give them a handout with the course learning outcomes. Based on the course material, they write a practice exam question and answer it.

You can have students do this in groups or individually, depending on how many questions you want. Everyone turns in their question and answer. By the end of the activity, you will have a practice exam that the whole class made together, including an answer key.

Why does this activity work?
The students have to consider which questions and materials are relevant based on the learning outcomes, prompting them to reflect on the course on a deeper level. Students will also be encouraged to complete the practice exam, as they made it themselves.

Tips
Consider variations on this exercise: ask the students to rate or evaluate each other's questions. Add one of the questions they came up with (if possible) to the real exam or add a question that is very similar. Mix up the students' questions with real questions from previous exams and have students discuss who wrote them (and why).
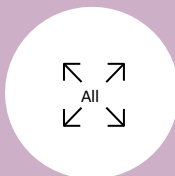
Content, form and function outlines

Preparation time

Some preparation

Group size

All

Cognitive level

Analyzing
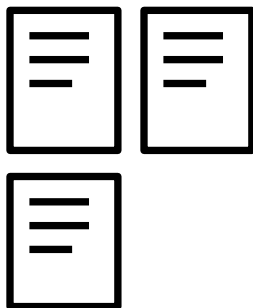
Content, form and function outlines

Materials
A blank outline for students with columns labelled **what**, **how** and **why**.

Time
10 - 15 minutes.

Activity
Students analyze the content, form and function of a piece of material.

Description
Content, form and function outlines have students analyze the **what** (content), **how** (form) and **why** (function) of a particular message (poem, newspaper story, critical essay, advertisement, etc.). The students write brief notes that address these questions in an outline format that can be reviewed quickly by the instructor.

Why does this activity work?
This method enables you to gauge students' skills at separating and analyzing the informational message, form and communicative function of course content. You can also see how well students can critique not only the message itself but also its presentation and purpose.

Tips
This method is similar to the '6 honest people' (3B), but quicker to conduct. You can also have students exchange and evaluate each other's analysis.
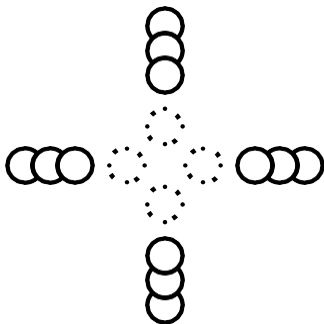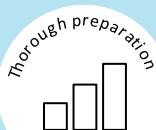
Discussion
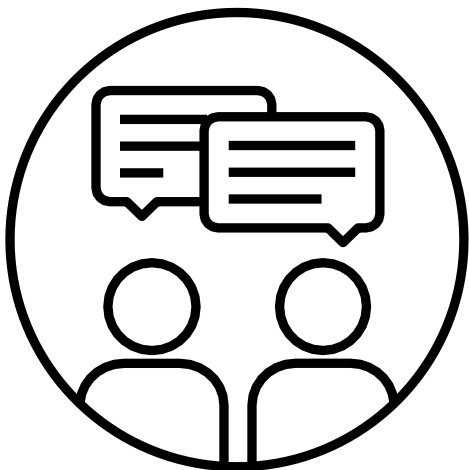
Discussion

Pinwheel discussion

Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Thorough preparation	5 - 30	Evaluating

Pinwheel discussion

Materials
Chairs and enough space.

Time
20 minutes.

Activity
Students stage a discussion from within different groups,
each with a different perspective or theme.

Description
Students are divided into groups of 3 or 4, each of which is given a topic or
point of view. One group is assigned the role of provocateur and comes up
with provocative questions to encourage the discussion.

Each group now chooses a speaker, who sits in the front chair facing the
others. The other group members fan out behind them (the top view
of this setup resembles a pinwheel). The provocateur asks provocative
questions and the speakers discuss them from their assigned positions. The
provocateurs encourage further discussion. Every few minutes, the speakers
rotate and pinwheel out of the discussion, to be replaced by another member
of their group, so that new speakers continue the discussion.

Why does this activity work?
It is a dynamic technique in which all students are ultimately (and equally)
involved. Besides, it forces students to stage a discussion from a certain
perspective. By adding the role of the provocateur you prevent the discussion
from ending too soon.

Tips
Have students switch rows (or positions) from time
to time so that they have to take on different roles.

Convince your neighbour

Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Minimal preparation	All	Evaluating
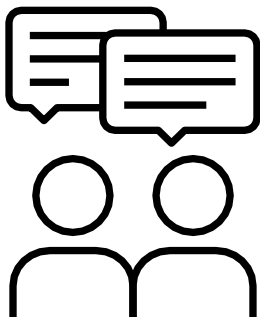
Convince your neighbour

Needed material	**Time**
None.	10 minutes.

Activity
In pairs, students try to convince each other of their point of view.
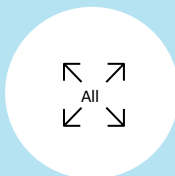
Description
Students form pairs and discuss a certain topic or proposition. They have 5 minutes to convince each other of their point of view. Afterwards you ask who succeeded in convincing their neighbour.

Why does this activity work?
This method is quick and easy to conduct and is suitable for large classrooms. It helps students engage with the topic, and since they only have a few minutes to convince each other, it forces them to prioritize their arguments.

If you have a central discussion afterwards, students will be more likely to participate actively, as they already have a point of view and arguments in mind. For students who find speaking in public difficult, discussing with a neighbour first lowers the barrier to participate in a class discussion.

Tips
If the group is not too big, you can have students walk around to find someone with opposing views to have the discussion with. You can also have a group discussion afterwards.

What's the news
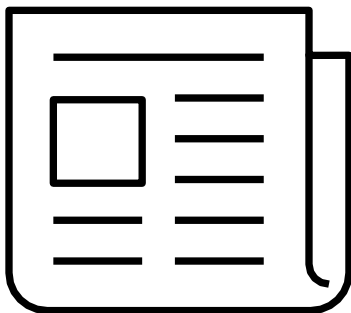
Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Some preparation	5 - 30	Creating

What's the news?

Needed material
A sign-up sheet.

Time
15 minutes per class.

Activity
Students find a news article that is appropriate for a particular class session.

Description
Students sign up for a class session when they want to give their presentation. Each class, a few students present a news article that they feel is relevant for the course. They present the news, give their own opinion about the matter, explain the link to the course material and come up with a few discussion questions.

Why does this activity work?
This works because students actively look for a real-life example relevant to the course material. This creates a meaningful experience with the material.

Tips
To create more discussions, you can have students imitate a talk show where they discuss the relevant news connected to the theme or topic of the class in question.

Convincing debate

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Preparation time

Some preparation

Group size

5 - 30
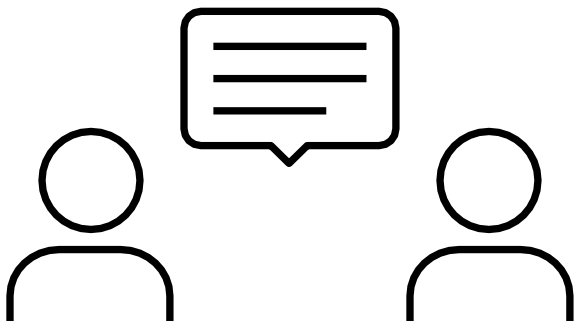
Cognitive level

Evaluating

Convincing debate

Needed material
Green (pro) and red (con) sign.

Time
15 minutes per round.

Activity
Students engage in a debate where they try to convince the other side. (pro vs. con).

Description
The classroom space is divided into a pro side and a con side.

As the facilitator, you introduce a statement and ask the participants to take sides (pro vs con). Students are asked to explain their choices, and thus convince the others. If they are convinced, they walk over to the other side of the room. If not, they stay.

Both staying and leaving are a conscious choice, so you can ask students to explain their position.

Halfway through the discussion, you can add controversial statements to give the discussion extra input.

Why does this activity work?
It's a dynamic and very visual method where you immediately see which arguments convince students to switch sides. There is also a challenge element in it, which encourages students to participate actively.

Tips
Make sure you provide a clear and inviting introduction and that the statement provokes discussion. After the class or at the end of the course, you can repeat the debate to see how students were influenced by what they learned.

Fishbowl
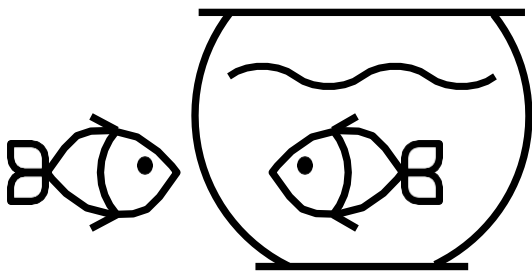
Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Thorough preparation	5 - 30	Analyzing

Fishbowl

Needed material	**Time**
Enough space to form an inner and outer circle.	20 minutes.

Activity

Students discuss in a small inner circle group while the outer circle listens actively.

Description

A fishbowl discussion is an activity where students sit in two circles: an inner and an outer circle.

The inner circle consists of 4-5 students who participate actively in the discussion. They are asked to debate on a given topic or open question, while a facilitator (usually the lecturer) makes sure each student gets a chance to speak.

The outer circle consists of all the other students in the classroom. They are silent and observe the inner circle. Only the students in the inner circle talk, while the students from the outer circle listen and take notes which will be discussed.
Usually, each session lasts 15 to 20 minutes, after which the students rotate so everyone gets a chance to discuss a topic.

Why does this activity work?

Through a fishbowl discussion, students work on developing higher verbal communication skills. They'll learn to concentrate on the speaker and actively listen, avoid distractions, be objective, support their arguments, and think of the next question. These are all aspects of advanced verbal communication skills.

Tips

You can give the observers specific points to look at. You can also form the circles based on how well prepared the students are. Students that prepared well form the inner circle, students that came unprepared form the outer circle.
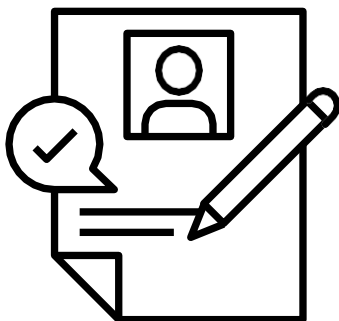
Collaboration
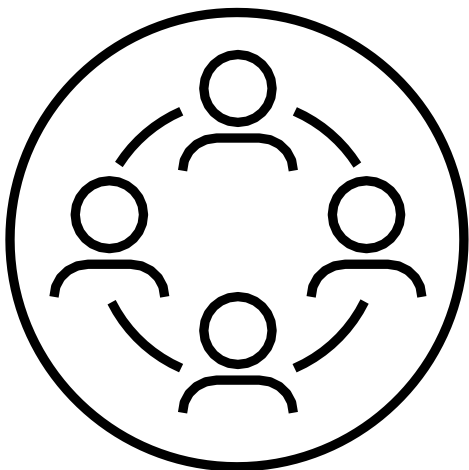
Collaboration

Vacancy board

Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Thorough preparation	5 - 30	Creating
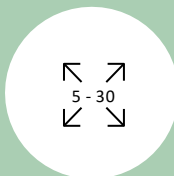
Vacancy board

Materials	**Time**
A large sheet, preferably a poster.	10 minutes.

Activity

Assigning students a course topic for which they have to find appropriate material.

Description

Before class

Create a vacancy board with all the subjects, themes or required literature that will be covered during the course. Those subjects become 'job vacancies.' You can fill in some of the vacancies yourself and leave the rest open.

During class

Students have to put their name next to a subject / theme / literature they find interesting. They shouldn't think about this for too long.

All students write down their names next to one or more job vacancies and form groups. They are responsible for the content of that part of the course and can work together on the tasks.

Why does this activity work?

This activity shifts ownership and responsibility towards the students. As instructor, you guide the process, but the students become responsible for co-creating a part of the course. The shared responsibility creates a group feeling and students should now be able to teach others about their chosen topic.

Tips

You can apply this method to anything where tasks or roles can be divided.

Jigsaw
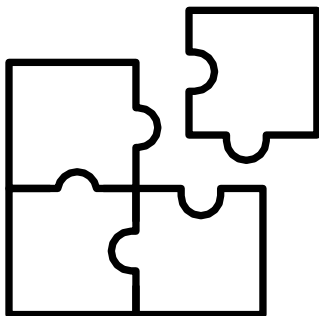
Preparation time

Thorough preparation

Group size

5 - 30

Cognitive level

Evaluating

Jigsaw

Materials	**Time**
Content you can divide.	30 minutes.

Activity

Students form expert groups from which they can teach their peers.

Description

In this activity, students first become experts on a particular sub-topic from the course content and then explain it to each other.

First, you have to assign students an equal but different sub-topic that you want them to learn. This can be before or in class. Usually it works best to break up the content into 4 to 6 sub-topics.

Students now form 'expert groups' in class by coming together to clarify and confirm the important parts of their specific sub-topic. They also devise a strategy to teach their sub-topic to the other groups.

After the expert groups have finished their work, they can form new groups with at least one member of each of the different expert groups. Each student now explains their sub-topic to the other members.

Why does this activity work?

This activity was designed to create a cooperative and interdependent learning environment that engages students and empowers them to take the ownership of their learning. The principle behind the technique is that we learn more by teaching. At the end of the activity, each student is familiar with all the aspects of the content.

Tips

You'll see that the more often you organize this activity, the better students will perform.

Analytic teams
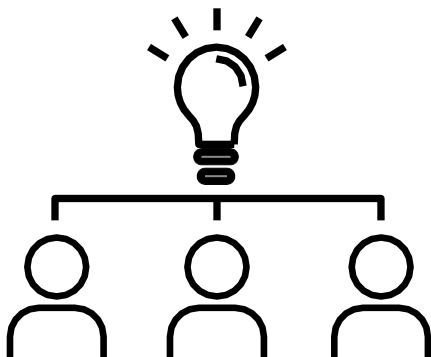
Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Some preparation	5- 30	Evaluating

Analytic teams

Materials Content that requires an analytical process.	**Time** 20 minutes.

Activity
Collaborative problem solving.

Description
Students form groups in which they critically read material together. Assign each student a different role within the analytic process, such as summarizer, connector, proponent or critic. It can be particularly useful to assign roles that exist within the norms of the discipline.

The analytic process is broken down into roles:
- *Proponents:* List the points you agreed with and state why.
- *Critics:* List the points you disagreed with or found unhelpful and state why.
- *Example Givers:* Give examples of key concepts presented.
- *Summarizers:* Prepare a summary of the essential points.
- *Questioners:* Prepare a list of substantive questions about the material.

Give the teams class time for the students to share their findings and present their analysis.

Why does this activity work?
It enables students to understand the different activities that constitute a critical analysis, and to focus on learning and performing one aspect at a time. This prepares students for more complex problem-solving assignments in which they may assume multiple roles.

Tips
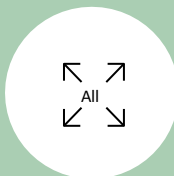Give students the freedom to decide how they will subdivide the roles in the team.

Placemat method

Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Some preparation	All	Understanding
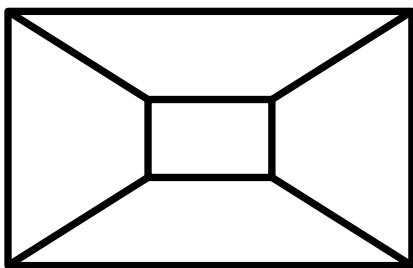
Placemat method

Materials
Large sheets of paper.

Time
20 minutes.

Activity
In groups of four, students write down ideas individually after which they compare responses and come up with a group answer.

Description
The placemat method is a cooperative teaching method where students have to collaborate to formulate a common response to a difficult question.
In groups of four, the students sit around a large paper sheet (A3 format or larger). Each student has their own box to fill in their answers.
You ask the students a question. Students now have to think about this and write their own answers silently in their own boxes.

After a while, the students can look at each other's answers and must consult each other and discuss the answers they have given. After that, the students form one group response. They write this answer in the middle rectangular / box. This answer has to be different from the individual responses.
If desired, the group responses can now be discussed centrally.

Why does this activity work?
Because all students first get the chance to formulate their own answers before coming up with a group answer. You can use this method to retrieve information about a previous class or topic. It is also a good way to prepare for a discussion. Finally, this activity is also very good to use for social skills classes, for example, to make joint agreements.

Tips
It works best with difficult questions that require a long answer.
The group answer should be better than the individual answers, so you can set your expectations high.

Who is the mole?
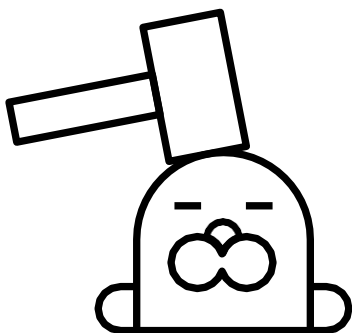
Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Some preparation	5 - 30	Analyzing

Who is the mole?

Materials	**Time**
Printed excercise and designated mole cards.	20 minutes.

Activity

Students work on an exercise in groups while trying to unmask the saboteur.

Description

Students have to work on an exercise together. They all receive a sheet with the same exercise, but one group member receives a sheet with the correct answer on it. This means this student is 'the mole' and must try to sabotage the outcome.

If the mole succeeds in sabotaging the answer (which means the group answers incorrectly) he wins. However, he has to operate with caution since the mole cannot influence the group too much without being unmasked.

If the group members succeed in providing the right answer, they win. They have to work together on coming up with the right answer, but meanwhile they are aware that a mole is trying to sabotage them, without knowing who it is.

Why does this activity work?

The element of gamification motivates and enthuses the students. It also creates an interesting group dynamic as students have to work together, but at the same time they must think for themselves and avoid being tricked by the mole.

Tips

This activity works best if there is only one unambiguously correct answer. Usually (multiple choice) exam questions are suitable. Make sure you play several rounds with more than one question so students can switch roles.
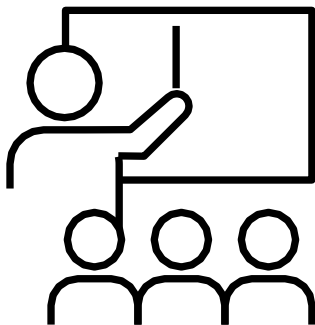
Evaluation & closing

Evaluation & closing

Micro teaching

Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Some preparation	5 - 30	Creating

Micro teaching

Materials
Students bring / request what they
need to deliver their micro lesson.

Time
2 - 3 minutes for preparation.
15 - 30 minutes during class.

Activity
Students give each other mini lessons on a topic that's been covered.

Description
When finishing up a topic / theme or towards the end of your course, you
can have students (individually or in groups) teach a micro lesson to their
peers. The students sign up for a topic that's been covered and use a provided
format to build a micro lesson plan. For a short time the student becomes the
teacher who teaches a short lesson. Other students can ask questions and/or
provide feedback.

You can rotate so that every important topic is discussed again and each
student (or group of students) has taught a micro lesson.

Why does this activity work?
According to a meta-analysis conducted by John Hattie (2009), micro
teaching is one of the most effective ways of learning. Students must have
in-depth knowledge of the topic to be able to complete the task effectively. If
you use this activity at the end of the course, an added benefit is that all the
material is repeated and revised. It is also a good way for you to gain insight
into your students' mastery of the material.

Tips
Make sure you guarantee a safe learning environment for
your students at all times. This method works best with small
groups and when students know each other.

Exit tickets
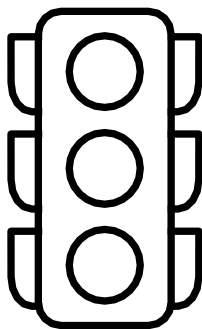
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Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Minimal preparation	All	Evaluating

Exit tickets

Materials (Optional)
Coloured post-its.

Time
10 minutes.

Activity
Students reflect on a question or problem on a post-it note.

Description
An exit ticket enables you to easily gain insight into students' understanding of the material before leaving class. You can also use it to evaluate a class. You can ask students what the main takeaways were or whether they need additional support or clarification.

Step 1: Design
Decide what you want to know about your students' learning at the end of a class. Write a question(s) or problem on the exit ticket.

Step 2: Collect
Give the students a few minutes to fill in the ticket. Collect the tickets at the door or in a collection box.

Step 3: Clarification
Sort out the tickets. You can start the next lesson with interesting tickets or with a graph that highlights common responses.

Why does this activity work?
An exit ticket can provide insight into students' level of mastery of the material. You can use this information to adapt instructions to students' learning needs in the next class.

Tips
Link the exit ticket to your class goals. Focus on a specific skill or concept that students should have learned that day. You can search online for existing templates. Student responses can also be collected online, for example with Wooclap or Microsoft Forms.
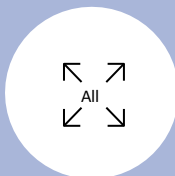
Self assessment
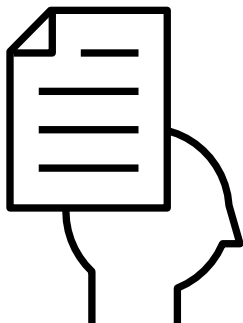
Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Minimal preparation	All	Evaluating

Self
assessment

Materials
None.

Time
10 minutes.

Activity
Students monitor and/or assess their own learning using guiding questions.

Description
Let students self-assess or self-evaluate their work (or their role or process) after an assignment or exam.

This encourages students to evaluate their own learning process and think about how they can improve their work (or learning). Ask them how confident they are about the work submitted, what they enjoyed, which questions they still have or which strategies they used to do the assignment, etcetera.

Why does this activity work?
Self-assessment can be a very effective tool for students, allowing them to become more self-directed and improve their self-regulation. A combination of self-assessment and external assessment can be particularly effective in helping students understand their strengths and weaknesses and set goals for improvement.

Self-assessment can also be beneficial for you as an instructor, to help gain insight into how students perceive themselves.

Tips
Self-assessment works best when it's not a one-off activity but a recurring part of the learning process. Therefore, it's best to have students do a self-assessment at various times throughout a course or project rather than just at the end.

Check out & check in
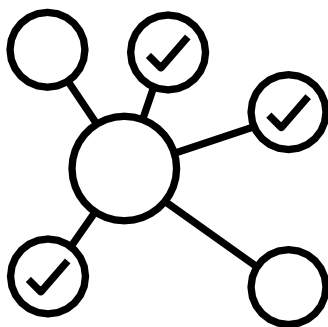
Preparation time	**Group size**	**Cognitive level**
Minimal preparation	5 - 30	Evaluating

Check out & check in

Materials
Nothing (just an open mind).

Time
5 - 30 minutes.

Activity
Students answer short questions at the beginning or end of the class.

Description
This activity can be used to start or end the class. It's not a conversation; it's sharing and dumping. Ask students to answer one or more closing questions related to the theme of the class. This can be about a substantive subject, but it can also be about cooperation. For example: students take turns sharing their answers, preferably popcorn style. When you want to say something, you can. Summarize what has been said after everyone has responded. If necessary, ask students to supplement. If you have a large group, this can also be done by raising hands or using a different gesture, or with an online tool.

Example questions: Can you use 3 words to describe how you view...? What else do you want to say? How do you feel leaving this class? What surprised you today? What lingers?

Why does this activity work?
Because everyone can share something, and this is also a great way to give everyone space at the beginning or end of the class. It brings things to the table that might otherwise remain unsaid, which also fosters inclusion.

Tips
When you ask students to share something vulnerable, it is a good idea to answer yourself first. This way, you also set an example for students about the length and openness of their answers.

Trash, travel, treasure
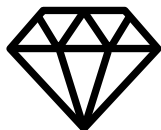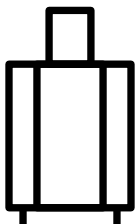
Preparation time	Group size	Cognitive level
Minimal preparation	5 - 30	Evaluating

Trash, travel, treasure

Materials (Optional)
You provide students with cards.

Time
5 - 10 minutes.

Activity
Students reflect on and evaluate their learning process
by using three prompts.

Description

Students have to write down 3 words: *Trash, Travel, Treasure*.

For trash, they write down what they are disappointed about or something that did not work out during the lecture or project. Something they might want to forget about can go in the trash.

For travel, they write down what they've learned and want to remember because it might help them in the future or in the next lecture(s). This goes in the travel case.

For treasure, the students write down the most positive or successful moment during a class or project. This is the treasure.

Why does this activity work?

It's quick and easy to conduct, but there is a lot in it. Students have to evaluate and reflect on a class or project and decide its most valuable aspects.

Tips
You can use this method throughout a whole course by asking your students to write this down at the end of every lecture. Create cards with 'trash,' 'travel' or 'treasure' on them to make the activity more lively. You could even bring a bin bag, suitcase and treasure chest.

More info about T L C and active learning?

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