

Supporting ALL Learners With Active Learning Strategies

Presented by:

Melinda R. Pierson, Ph.D.
Professor and Fulbright Specialist
College of Education
California State University, Fullerton

Setting the Stage

- ▶ 25% of all students in California are English Learners
- ▶ 28.3% of all students in Orange County are English Learners
- ▶ 96% of all students in Santa Ana are English Learners
- ▶ 10% of all students are labeled with some type of disability and have Individual Education Plans
 - 70% of these identified students are educated in General Education classrooms
 - 94% of these students were identified because of a challenge in Reading/Language Arts (Tilly, 2007)

Quality in Education

"Quality is never an accident;
it is always
the result of high intention,
sincere effort,
intelligent direction,
and skillful execution;
it represents the wise choice of many
alternatives."
Willa A. Foster

Encouraging Active Learning

- ▶ All students learn more when actively engaged (Ueckert & Gess-Newsome, 2007).
- ▶ Individuals must engage with the content and with others, unveil prior ideas, make connections between ideas, and construct new knowledge from their experiences (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2008).

What is Active Learning?

- ▶ Debating ideas
- ▶ Asking questions
- ▶ Comparing answers to what is known
- ▶ Using evidence to develop explanations
- ▶ Considering alternatives
- ▶ Making ideas public while realizing that explanations may change after group discussion

Why Should Passive Learning Be Avoided?

- ▶ Creates apathy and boredom in the student
- ▶ Isolated bits of knowledge are learned - no content and experience connections
- ▶ Commonly seen as “filling the brain with knowledge taught by an authority”

Active Learning Inspires. . .

- ▶ a strong classroom community of learners who embody
 - Dignity (confident, secure, valuable)
 - Energy (alive, busy, active)
 - Self-management (appropriate choices, guide and discipline themselves, work willingly)
 - Community (sharing, cooperation, interdependence, support)
 - Awareness (concentrate, observe, listen, think, notice, evaluate, mindful, attentive) (Boyer, 2002)

Education Reform in the United States

- ▶ Common Core Standards
 - The goal is college and career readiness
 - Collaboration
 - Communication
 - Critical thinking
 - Creativity
 - All 4 cannot occur without active learning!

Study of 302 Elementary School Students

- ▶ 2nd–5th graders (7–11 years old) improved overall academic achievement by 5% after 5 active learning strategies were included in their language arts and mathematics classroom over a 1 month period.
- ▶ Boyer (2002) found a 14% academic increase after active learning strategies were used.
- ▶ 96% of all surveyed reported that they liked active learning versus the way the class was previously taught by traditional lecture and paper/pencil tasks/assessment.

Students used to say. . .

- ▶ This class is boring.
- ▶ Why do you have to learn this anyway?
- ▶ When are we going to use this stuff in real life?

- ▶ They also used to look bored and were less engaged with the material.

Students in the study said. . .

- ▶ We are all willing to help each other.
- ▶ Our class really gets along.
- ▶ People are less selfish.
- ▶ We have more freedom to share ideas.
- ▶ I feel like people listen more.
- ▶ We have way more fun.

Research-Based Active Learning Strategies

- ▶ Systematic (consistent)
- ▶ Intentional (well-planned)
- ▶ Explicit (clear and concise)
- ▶ Engaging
- ▶ Fun

Active Learning Strategies

Practical Ideas to Try Now!

Choral Response

- Responses can be oral or physical
- Use when answers are short or the same
 - To read a passage, reinforce a concept or knowledge-based information
- More responses, more learning, more attentive
- Prevents blurters or lagers

Examples of Physical Responses

- ▶ Thumb It
 - Pointing up, sideways, upside down to get an assessment of a student's level of understanding.
- ▶ Fist of Five
 - 5 - I know it well!
 - 4 - I can do it alone.
 - 3 - I need some help.
 - 2 - I could use more practice.
 - 1 - I am beginning to understand.

More Examples of Physical Responses

- ▶ Face the Fact
 - Use index cards with a happy face, straight face and sad face.
 - This can be for student feelings or character feelings.
- ▶ Speedometer Reading
 - Use arms or can even walk/run to show understanding.
- ▶ Reaching for the Top
 - Extend one arm straight up in the air.
 - 2, 4, 6, or 8 demonstrate the level of understanding.

Partner Responses

- Use when answers are long or different.
- Teacher assigns each student a number (1 or 2).
- Students are able to partner up and share their answers.

Tell-Help-Check: A Review Strategy

- 1's **Tell** 2's _____ (may add write first!)
- 2's Listen then **Help** by adding/editing/improving...
- Both **Check** on page _____

Think-Write-Pair-Share

- Students listen while the teacher poses questions or a task.
- Students are given quiet time to answer the question.
- Students are cued to pair with a neighbor and discuss their responses, noting similarities and differences.
- After rehearsing responses with a partner, students are invited to share publicly.
(e.g. *My partner pointed out...;*
My partner mentioned that...; We agreed that;
We decided that...)

Give One, Get One

- Students write their names legibly on a piece of paper.
- The student writes several ideas and draws a line after the last idea to separate the ideas from those they select from classmate's lists.
- Students move around the classroom and interact with one classmate at a time. They exchange papers, read the list and then ask questions about the new or confusing ideas.

Talking Chips

- Pose a question for students to discuss.
- Each student is given a "chip" (small square of paper or poker chip).
- Students take turns "talking" by placing their CHIP into the center of the table.
- Students can not speak again until all members of the group have placed their "chip" in the middle of the table.

Numbered Heads

Small Group Discussion & Review Strategy

- Students number off in teams - one through four.
 - The teacher asks a series of questions, one at a time.
 - Students discuss possible answers to each question for a specific amount of time, depending on the complexity of the task.
 - The teacher calls on a number (1-4) and all students with the specific number raise their hand, ready to respond.
 - The teacher randomly calls on students with the specific number to answer on behalf of their team.
 - Students are encouraged to acknowledge similarities and differences between their team's response and that of other teams.
- (We predicted a very different outcome; Our reaction was similar to ...)*

Wraparounds

- ▶ Participants form a circle.
- ▶ Each individual takes a turn telling. . .
 - Something the student will use from the lesson
 - Something the student will remember from today
 - A significant AHA from this lesson
 - I have learned. . .
 - I hope to learn. . .

Written Responses

- ▶ List three reasons, two examples, or one prediction.
- ▶ Today I learned. . .tomorrow I need. . .
- ▶ Today I felt. . .because. . .
- ▶ I would color today (blue, yellow, red, etc.) because. . .
- ▶ I hope we. . .next.
- ▶ One word to describe today is. . .
- ▶ I felt like a (name of animal) during the. . .

Metacognitive Markers

Students work with a task, passage, or reading assignment.

- * Something you already knew
- \$ New learning or A-ha
- ! Emotional Response
- ? Unanswered Question

10 Word Summary or A Two Minute Paper

- ▶ In 10 words or less, summarize the most important aspects from today's discussion.
- ▶ In two minutes, draw or write what you remember from the lesson or what you learned today.

Graffiti Wall

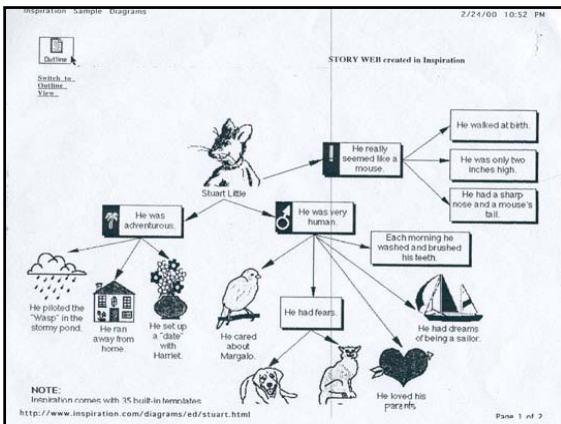
- ▶ Place a large piece of poster paper on the wall.
- ▶ Ask the students to write any words that they can think of about the lesson topic for that day.
- ▶ As the lesson goes along, students can add words that they learn.
- ▶ Words can be taken off if students learn that these words are non-examples and do not fit with the lesson.

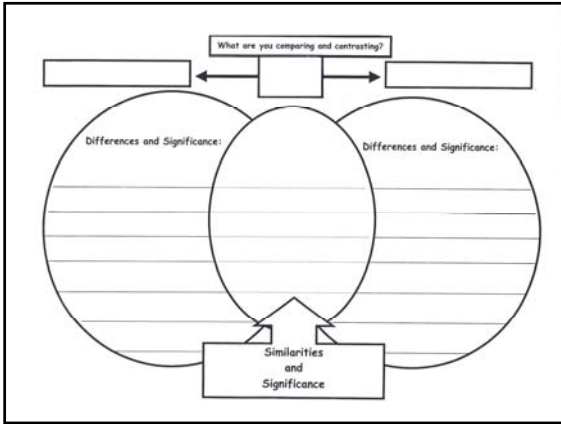
Rotation Reflection – Words or Drawings

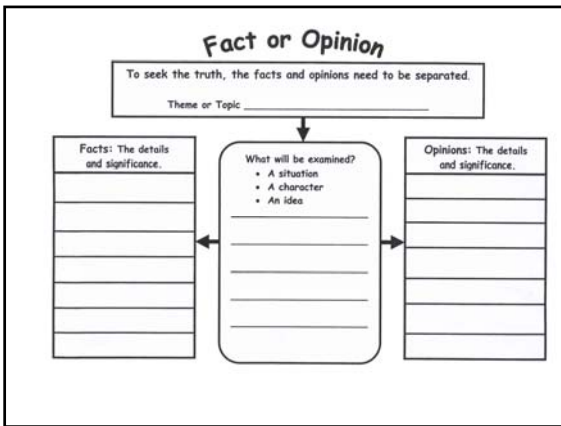
- ▶ Post charts around the room with a related topic written on each sheet.
- ▶ Assign small groups to each location. Encourage groups to share ideas and views on the topic written on the chart.
- ▶ Have a recorder fill in the chart with the ideas generated.
- ▶ Ask the groups to move to the next chart and respond to that topic.
- ▶ Groups continue around the room to each chart.

Visual Diagrams

- Graphic organizer or a concept map
- Can be computer generated







Model "Thinking"

- Demonstrate your own thinking...share how you reached a conclusion or what mnemonics you used.
- Thinking aloud allows for the students to see your cognitive processes in action (Davey, 1983).
- Ask your students to share the process that they used to complete the task.

Use a Highlighter

- Model for the student.
- Ask the student to highlight important facts. A peer or teacher can check. OR
- Ask the student to highlight the number of problems on the page that they are required to finish at home, etc.

Summary

- ▶ Remember that as an educator, you are the “light” in an academic setting. . .you set the mood, you provide the supports, and you make a difference in the lives of those around you. Use this “power” to the best of your ability to shape lives for the better!
- ▶ Active teaching strategies promote vibrant learning!

Something to think about. . .

The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that the aim is too low and we reach it.

Michelangelo
