

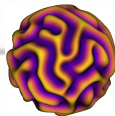
# Active learning

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## Learning objectives

You will be able to...

- Define active learning
- Explain why active learning is useful
- Connect active learning to inclusive teaching
- Connect active learning to how students learn
- Discuss potential pitfalls of active learning, and how to avoid them

# What is active learning?



- Give students agency to control and contribute to their own learning
- Reinforce knowledge by having students teach each other
- Build community between students, and build community within the classroom

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Ultimately, active learning is anything that elevates your students from passive recipients of knowledge to participants actively building and curating knowledge.



## bell hooks 2010

“Engaged pedagogy is vital to any rethinking of education because it holds the promise of full participation on the part of students. [...] Learning and talking together, we break with the notion that our experience of gaining knowledge is private, individualistic, and competitive. [...] Genuine conversation is about the sharing of power and knowledge; it is fundamentally a cooperative enterprise.”



## Dewsbury and Brame 2019

“The architects of critical pedagogy and pedagogy for critical consciousness have been challenging the academy to be more student centered for the past century. [These scholars, like Freire and hooks have] argued that instructors should build pedagogy around the voices and lives of their students, relying on ongoing dialogue with students to build classes as inclusive spaces. In this context, inclusion is built on the quality of the social relationship, which in turn relies on a knowledge of its participants.”



## Inclusion and equity in the classroom is social

- Active learning provides structured and meaningful interactions for students
  - with each other
  - and with you
- Embracing active learning is one way to reimagine our teaching spaces
- Giving students agency in your class helps mitigate issues of power imbalance



## Retrieval dump

Take ~ 2 minutes to write down everything you can remember from the **How students learn** presentation.





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Take ~ 2 minutes to discuss, at a high level, with a partner.



## Effective activities target the ways students learn

- Active learning can apply at all levels of learning
- Have students directly engage in practice
- Let students find connections between topics
- Guide students in applying course concepts to their own lives
- Prompt students to retrieve information
  - This doesn't even need to be a structured activity



## We still need to be careful to maintain inclusivity

- Active learning is communal, hence students need to feel a sense of community and trust
- To be actively engaged students need to want to learn
- Not all students will be comfortable sharing with the whole class
- Activities can trigger some anxiety
- Groups can easily become unbalanced, with one or two people dominating



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Overall, students need to feel that they belong and that they are all being accounted for. Activities need to come with intentional scaffolding, and should leave space for students to engage however they are comfortable.

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  - Try assigning group roles



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- Collaborative Learning Techniques, Elizabeth Barkley, Claire Howell Major, Patricia Cross
- <https://citl.ucsc.edu/resources/active-learning/>
- <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/active-learning/>
- <https://www.stemteachingcourse.org/intro-ebt/module-5-active-learning>