

Developing as a Teacher

Sept. 17 2024

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Introductions

TA Advice with Nick (based on Val's TA Tips!)

Active learning, formative evaluations

Enhancing inclusivity

What to do for yourself

Q&A

Schwenk's hints

Pop Quiz: What do you need to do to graduate?

- **Advice #1:** You're paid to TA, but you can't graduate if you don't write your thesis/dissertation—don't let teaching distract you.
- **Advice #2:** Teach strategically to protect your time.
- **Advice #3:** Set clear boundaries and expectations with your students.

How to be a “good” TA

Advice #4: Emulate your inspirational profs and avoid the bad habits of those that could have been better.

Advice #5: Teach to your least-advantaged student (originally heard from @DNLee on Instagram, this is straight from Val).

Advice #6: If you don't know the answer, admit it. If you make a mistake, admit it—being honest will gain you respect from your students.

Building a strong foundation, will allow you to develop further as an instructor (i.e. design courses, develop materials, write a teaching philosophy).

Teaching Evals.

- UConn offers students of every class the chance to fill out course evaluations at the end of the semester.
- Encourage students to (honestly) complete their evaluations, and to provide comments if they can.
 - A specific % of students need to complete the evaluation for it to be saved/accessible by you.
 - Download the evaluation, read it, reflect on what went right and be honest with yourself about what could have been better.
 - Can use student quotes or course metrics for future applications, teaching statements, etc.

Instructor of Record!

- EEB offers a rare opportunity to become an instructor of record as a graduate student
- Usually through a summer course
- Fantastic for your CV, especially if you want to teach in your future career!



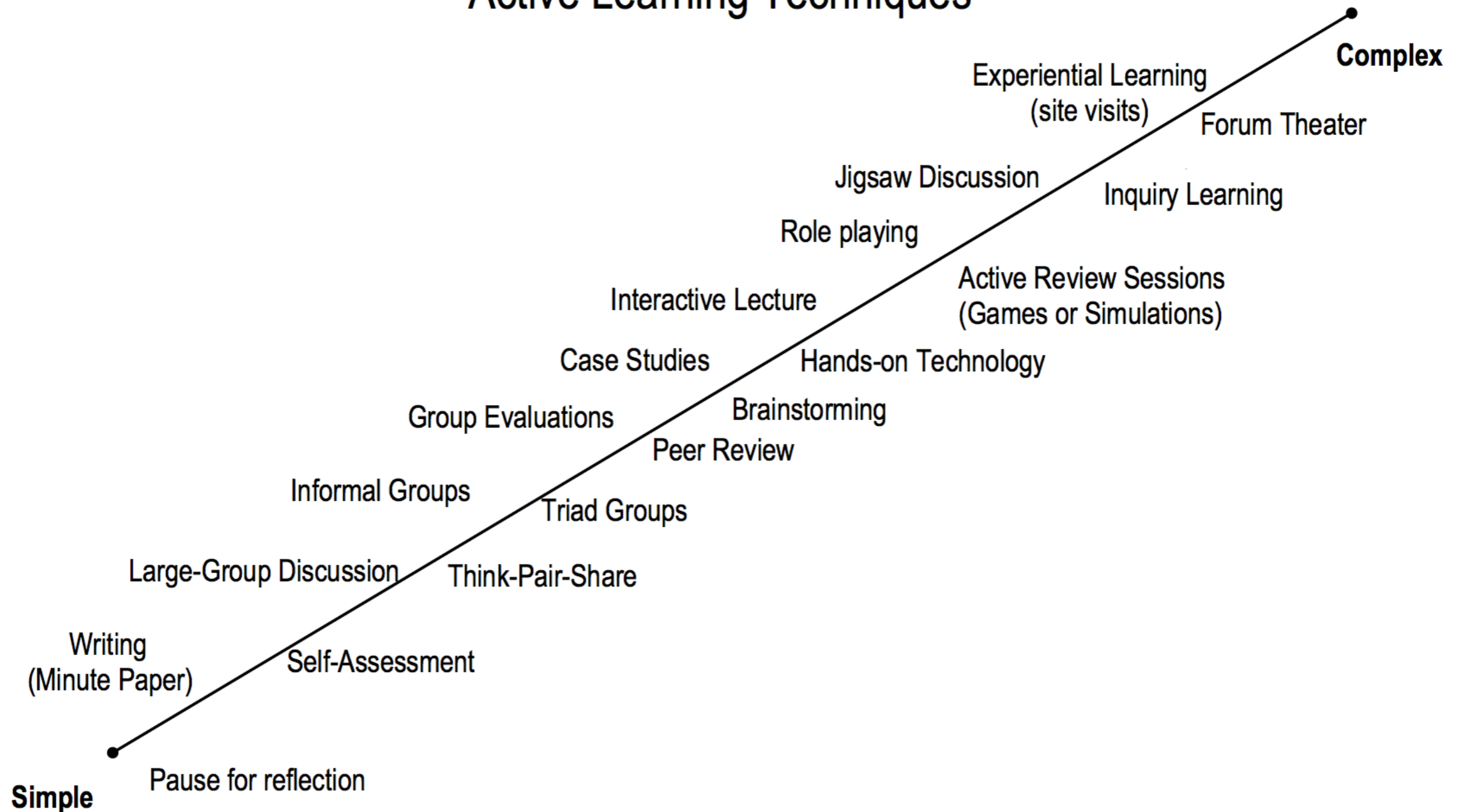
What is active learning pedagogy?

“...in-class activities, pre-lecture preparation,
frequent low-risk assessment..”

Benefits

- ALP supports multiple levels of understanding.
- Students respond to different modes of instruction because there are multiple ways of learning. Having different ways to present material matches those needs.
- ALP provides benefits to underrepresented students compared to traditional lecture instruction (e.g., Ballen et al. 2017).

Active Learning Techniques



This spectrum arranges active learning techniques by complexity and classroom time commitment.

Prepared by Chris O'Neal and Tershia Pinder-Grover, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan

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Bonwell, C.C. (1996). Enhancing the lecture: Revitalizing a traditional format. In T.E. Sutherland, C.C. & Bonwell (Eds.), *Using active learning in college classes: A range of options for faculty.* (pp.31-44). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Felder, R.M., & Brent, R. (1994). Cooperative learning in technical courses: Procedures, pitfalls, and payoffs. (*ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 377038*).

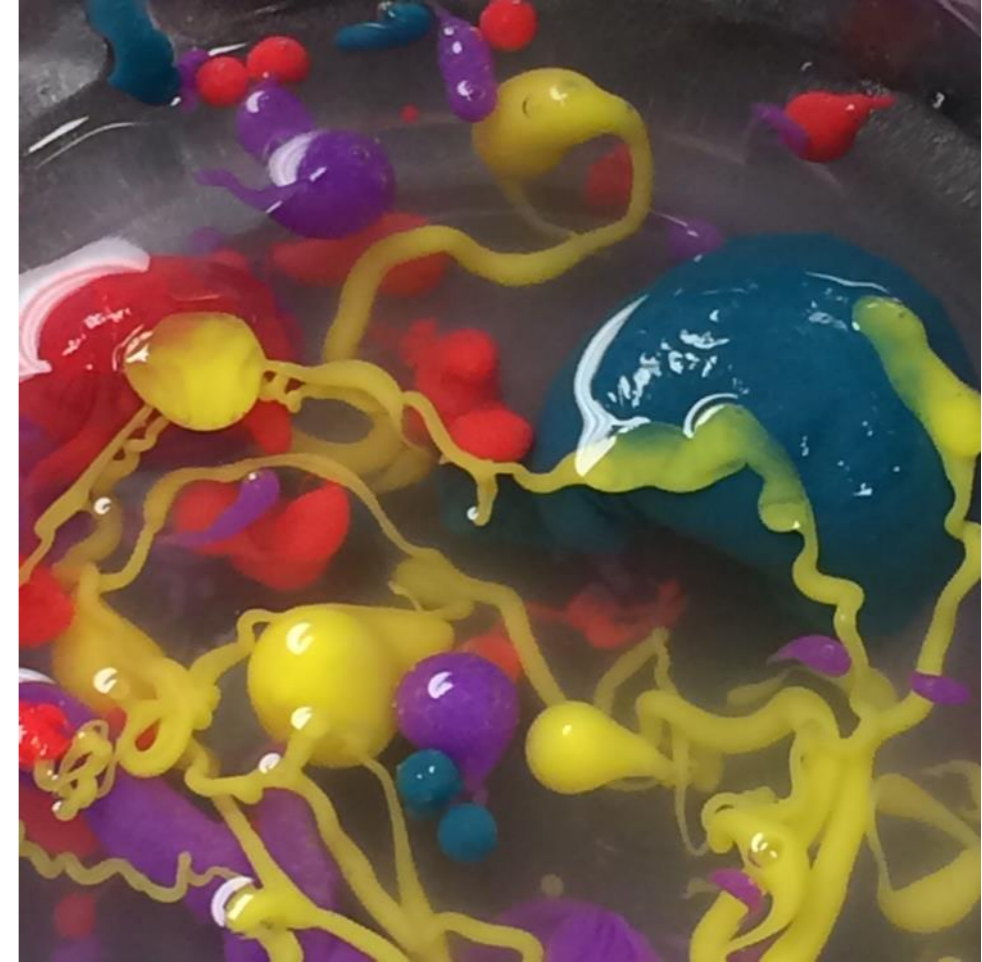
McKeachie, W.J. (2005). How to make lectures more effective. In *Teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers* (11th ed.) (pp. 52-68). New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Paulson, D.R., & Faust, J.L. (n.d.). *Active learning for the college classroom.*

California State University:

<http://www.calstatela.edu/dept/chem/chem2/Active/>

- Flipped lectures
- Studio format: integrate lecture & lab
- Props / demos
- Unexpected contrasts.
Which is faster, a swimming algal cell or a 747 when size scaled? [hint: It's the cell!]
- **What's wrong with this picture?**
Show an image that misrepresents something we know, ask students to point out & correct the misinformation.
- Role play
- Collaborative/team projects



algae gels made by students in class demonstrate the importance of ionic cross links in forming the gels

Using formative evaluations

*interactive classroom discussions,
self-assessments, warm-up
quizzes, mid-semester
evaluations, exit quizzes, etc.*



No risk / low risk assessments

Anonymous polls, iClickers, etc.

Especially good for connecting new knowledge
to old (even if old is incorrect)

(E.g., re-do poll questions)

Research shows learning enhancement when students evaluate or reflect on their learning.

“Wrappers”

Used post-quiz /exam to help students process/reflect on graded work more deeply than just looking at the grade.

Helps them evaluate their level of preparation, what they did well and what needs improvement.

Helps them reflect on the nature of their errors to find recurring patterns that could be addressed.

Schwenk's helpful tips

example

This activity is designed to give you a chance to reflect on your exam performance and, more importantly, on the effectiveness of your exam preparation. Please answer the questions sincerely. Your responses will be collected to inform the instructional team about students' experiences surrounding this exam and how we can best support your learning. They will have no impact on your grade.

1. Approximately how much time did you spend preparing for this exam? 12 hours

2. What percentage of your test-preparation time was spent in each of these activities?

a. Reading the OLI section(s) for the first time	_____
b. Re-reading textbook section(s)	_____
c. Re-reading the OLI material	<u>40%</u>
d. Reviewing your own notes	<u>30%</u>
e. Working the practice exam questions	<u>30%</u>
f. Reviewing materials from blackboard (What materials? _____)	_____
g. Other (Please specify: _____)	_____

3. Now that you have looked over your graded exam, estimate the percentage of points you lost due to each of the following (make sure the percentages add up to 100):

a. Trouble with applying definitions	<u>10%</u>
b. Trouble remembering structures	_____
c. Lack of understanding of the concepts	<u>20%</u>
d. Unclear expectations	<u>30%</u>
e. Not knowing how to approach the problem	_____
f. Careless mistakes	<u>40%</u>
g. Other (Please specify: _____)	_____

4. Based on your responses to the questions above, name at least 3 things you will do differently in preparing for the next exam. For instance, will you just spend more time, change a specific study habit or try a new one (if so, name it), try to sharpen some other skill (if so, name it), use SI more, participate in more review opportunities, something else?
 - 1) For the next exam, I will begin studying a few days before the exam
 - 2) I will participate in more review opportunities
 - 3) I will spend more time on the practice exam questions

5. What can we do to help support your learning and your preparation for the next exam?

Provide answers to the my responses in O.L.I.

PLEASE CONTINUE ON THE BACK ON ANY QUESTION WHERE YOU NEED MORE ROOM.

Enhancing inclusivity

Many reasons that students don't participate—can be due to real barriers, or assumptions/expectations.

Include alternative ways for students to get involved:

e.g. online discussions

e.g. email questions/participation exercises

Provide ample information, be as flexible as possible.
Treat students as the individual, adult people they are.

Practical hints

- **Be predictable and explicit**

Re: grading, level of detail expected in answers, re-grading

- **Help students understand how to interact with you.**

E.g., tell students how to address you via email and how quickly to expect a response. (You are not expected to be available 24/7.)

- **Get many opinions on how to teach**

Talk to past previous course TAs re: what worked well/didn't work well in the past.

What to do for yourself?

- Resources at UConn

<https://cetl.uconn.edu/>

- Teaching evaluations. Perhaps consider formative evaluations, mid-semester.
- Go easy on yourself, and realize all of this takes time!

Q&A

- How much teaching experience do you need to get a faculty job?