This is Your Brain on Active Learning: A workshop with practical strategies for your dynamic class
Handout – Tuesday, June 4, 2019
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This interactive workshop will guide participants through various essential active learning practices for teaching small and large classes and offer an opportunity for participants to experience their brain on active learning. By engaging in this student-centered pedagogical approach, educators will engage in students' learning processes (i.e. on what students do to learn).

The facilitators will incorporate pedagogical transparency (explaining to participants/students what we will do, how we will do it and why we will do it) to further demonstrate how educators can incorporate an approach that allows students to take ownership of knowledge and contribute to the advancement of knowledge. Some of these essential active learning practices for teaching small and large classes are:

- Day to day practices
- Setting the tone for active learning
- Establishing group norms
- Organizing group roles
- Creating effective debriefing opportunities
- Assessing group collaboration and learning artifacts

If you are interested in this workshop you likely already acknowledge that teaching is more than a simple transfer of knowledge. Educators come to understand that it is also a remarkable art through which strong personal and stimulating relationships are created that will empower students and teachers alike. This workshop's goals are to re-visit how exciting and powerful active learning can be and motivate participants to strengthen their teaching muscles and sharpen their minds.

Workshop Overview

- Welcome

- Review of Active Learning Strategies

- **Fast Pass & Break**

- Group work (applying part 1 to pedagogical design)

- Debriefing & Assessment

- Reflection

- Discussion

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Group Norms or Ground Rules

Group Norms or Ground Rules are used to help a group work together effectively & efficiently; they guide the behaviour of the individuals in the group. Once set the facilitator & participants are encouraged to make use of them.

Three (3) categories that group norms should cover:	1. **Preparations:** attendance, timing, pre-work, routine tasks
	2. **Relations:** confidentiality, decision making, respect, differing opinions
	3. **Communications:** interruptions, conversational courtesies, "I" statements

Ways to generate Group Norms:

1. **Develop group norms as a group &/or suggest some as the facilitator**

Create your own group norms by asking a group to brainstorm and decide on a few guiding group norms that will help your group or team *improve their performance*, *working relationships*, and *individual well-being*.

2. **Using recurrent problems/issues**

Ask a group or team what usually happens that makes things not work well and then generate group norms that will help deal with/avoid the issues. (Example: some people tend to monopolize conversations at meetings so our group norm is "be aware of sharing air time."

3. **Group Norms – Trigger List**

Providing a "sample" set of Group Norms or group norms as a model for the group to use can be helpful so that they can develop their own. Page 3 of this handout provides a compiled list of group norms covering many options. Note they should be written universally in the positive (we will do this) or negative (we won't do this) – don't mix the two! Make some notes below for your own reference from the group norms activity.

ACTIVITY: What are our group norms for today's training? What do you need in order to be fully present, engaged, ready to take risks with this process today and have fun?

Use page 3 of this handout to select a few group norms in small groups!

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Group Norms – Trigger List

Samples:

Treat each other with respect.	The group speaks in one voice.	Be a good listener.
Always use an agenda.	Conversational courtesies.	Everyone participates.
Create the next agenda before we leave.	Respect the group's time. Keep comments short and to the point.	Everyone is responsible for following the group norms.
Pre-set meeting time and place	Listen for understanding.	Do office work in the office.
Stay on topic.	One person talks at a time.	Test assumptions.
Make criticism constructive.	No gossip.	Balance advocacy and inquiry.
Direct arguments at ideas or opinions, not at people.	Everyone has the responsibility to contribute.	Focus on interests.
Think before reacting.	Use group records.	Use decision-making rules.
Be clear, give examples when necessary.	Ideas belong to the group, not the individual.	Deal with conflict as it arises.
Arrive on time and end on time.	Be frank and honest.	Use issue board.
Say what you mean, mean what you say.	Three knock rule. (this could be used if people go off topic for example)	Use assessments to improve.
Share relevant information.	It's ok to have fun.	Passing on an activity is ok.

Gradients of Agreement & Decision-Making Handout

Gradients of Agreement							
Agreement Zone					It Depends	Disagreement zone	
Majority Agreement Zone							
Consensus Agreement Zone							
Unanimous Agreement Zone							
Endorsement	Endorsement w/minor point of contention	Agreement w/reservation	Abstain	Stand aside	Formal disagreement but willing to go along with majority	Formal disagreement w/absolved of responsibility 4 implementing it.	Block
Like it	Basically like it	Have no opinion	Have no opinion	Don't like this but don't want to hold up group	Want my disagreement noted in writing but won't fight the decision	Don't want to stop anyone else but don't want to be involved with implementing it	I veto the proposal
Love it	Like it	Support it	Won't oppose it	Don't care for it but go ahead	Don't like it but go ahead	Don't like it and don't want to be involved w/it	Can't let this happen

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Decision-making

Decision Type	For When	Pro	Con
Unanimous agreement	-Issues are trivial -Full discussion isn't critical -Speed is not important	-Fast and easy -Unites the group	-May occur too fast -May limit needed discussion -Potential for group think
Consensus agreement	-Issues are important -Total support matters -Need to think creatively -Speed is not important	-Collaborative -Systematic -Participative -Gains commitment -Discussion oriented	-Takes time -Requires data -Requires members use communication skills -Time and cost to get a decision
Majority Agreement	-Issues are trivial -There are clear options -Division of the group is ok	-Fast -Clear outcome -Good decision probable if proceeded by discussion	-Someone loses
Consultative with Group Input	-Speed is important -Opinions are valued -One person is responsible for results	-Assigns responsibility	-Potential for a majority of the group to not support the decision
Command decision	-One person is responsible for results -Decisions can be achieved by the group	-Assigns responsibility -Gains commitment among group -Quick decision possible	-Potential for a majority of the group to not support the decision

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Opening Up Discussion

There are various models to open up a discussion or debrief. Here are two models for your reference.

Five Stages of Debriefing Model

1. **Describe**
   Participants describe what they saw happen in the activity.

   "What did you see happening?"

2. **Relate**
   Participants relate the activity to themselves by identifying what the activity was like for them, how it made them feel, or by using the activity "situation" as a context for exploring their own lives in some way.

   How did this activity make you feel?" "What did it make you think about?"

3. **Analyze**
   Participants analyze the implications of the activity. In doing so, they may assess things like similarities or differences, the potential effects of the situation, or look at all of the implications of the theme being discussed.

   "What were some of the similarities and differences you observed?" "What were some of the potential effects of this situation?" "Why did we do it this way instead of that way?"

4. **Expand**
   Participants expand their analysis of the situations being discussed to other people.

   "How are students affected by this situation?"

   "Who else does this happen to?"

5. **Offer Alternatives**
   Participants brainstorm ideas that explore how the implications of the situations being discussed can have positive, healthy outcomes for students. This brainstorm often includes concrete ideas for action about how this can be accomplished, and can include, personal, interpersonal, social and institutional actions.

   "What could be different?" "How can we work to change this situation?"

*Note: you won't always need to use all stages of the model, or do them in order.

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Three Stage Debriefing Model

There are generally three (3) sequential steps a facilitator takes participants through to analyze an activity and extrapolate ideas from it. Although the debrief is demarcated from the activity itself, the separation of one from another is rather artificial. The debrief is just as much a part of the fabric of the experience for the participants as the activity itself. It is, as Dewey might have construed it, the experience that elaborates or attenuates the experience. From the point of view of the participants – not unimportant here – both the activity and the back and forth that develops immediately afterward run as one fluid in their veins and brain cells, influencing both physical and mental states as if they were one.

The three steps are what happened, implications, and applications

1) **What happened** involves a recitation of what actually occurred within the confines of the activity; who did what to whom and in what order.

2) **Implications** derive from an examination of the meaning of what just happened, the interpretations that can legitimately be drawn from the experience, particularly in terms of the functioning of organizations and the practice of leadership.

3) **Applications** relate to what the participants should do differently from here on in because of what was just learned, that is, how what was learned from the experience ought to be translated into what happens upon return to the workplace.

Kaagan, Stephen (1999). *Leadership Games: Experiential Learning for Organizational Development*. U.S.A.: SAGE Publications, Inc. p. 22.

Another version of this debriefing model translates as:

"What?"

"So what?"

"Now what?"

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Question Type	Examples	Use
Evidence	• What is the basis for your claim? • Where is that view expressed in the text?	*When an opinion or contribution seems incorrect, unsupported or unjustified.*
Clarification	• Can you provide an example of what you are talking about? • Can you explain the term you are using?	*To provide speakers a chance to expand on an idea and perhaps be better understood by the class.*
Open-ended	• Why do you think many take up the nursing profession despite low pay and long hours? • What do you think about the two candidates in this election?	*To open discussion in multiple directions – expanding on intellectual and emotional aspects of issues.*
Connective	• How does your observation relate to the discussion in class last week? • How does what you are saying add to what has already been said?	*To engage students in the continuity of the discussion; highlighting new information and relating it to prior observations.*
Hypothetical	• How might the discussion have been different if the leader had refrained from lecturing? • What if the South had won the Civil War?	*To allow students to draw on their knowledge and experience to create probable scenarios (especially helpful for problem solving).*
Cause-and-effect	• What will be the impact of increasing class size from 50 to 500? • What were the causes and effects of World War II?	*To allow students to consider the relationship and impact of particular circumstances, conditions or situations.*
Comparative	• What is this really a choice between? • What are the main differences between Christian and Jewish tenets?	*To probe students to think about completing claims or conflicting theories.*
Summary	• What are 2 of the most important ideas that emerged from today's discussion? • What remains unresolved?	*To summarize or synthesize what has been said. Allows for identification of main ideas and may help improve recall.*

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WHAT AM I LEARNING?

ON THESE LEVELS…?		
Student (what have I learned as a student from my experiences today? What skills have I developed? How will this help me as a student?)	**Educator** (In my role as an educator, what specific skills/knowledge have I gained? What have I discovered that I would like to develop further?)	**Change Agent** (How do I see applying these skills/knowledge in the future? As a student, educator and/or professional? What transformation do I want to activate for the upcoming semester or year?)

Adapted from The Art & Craft of Designing & Facilitating Learning Spaces Master Class - Kaospilot

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