

# Active Learning in the Classroom



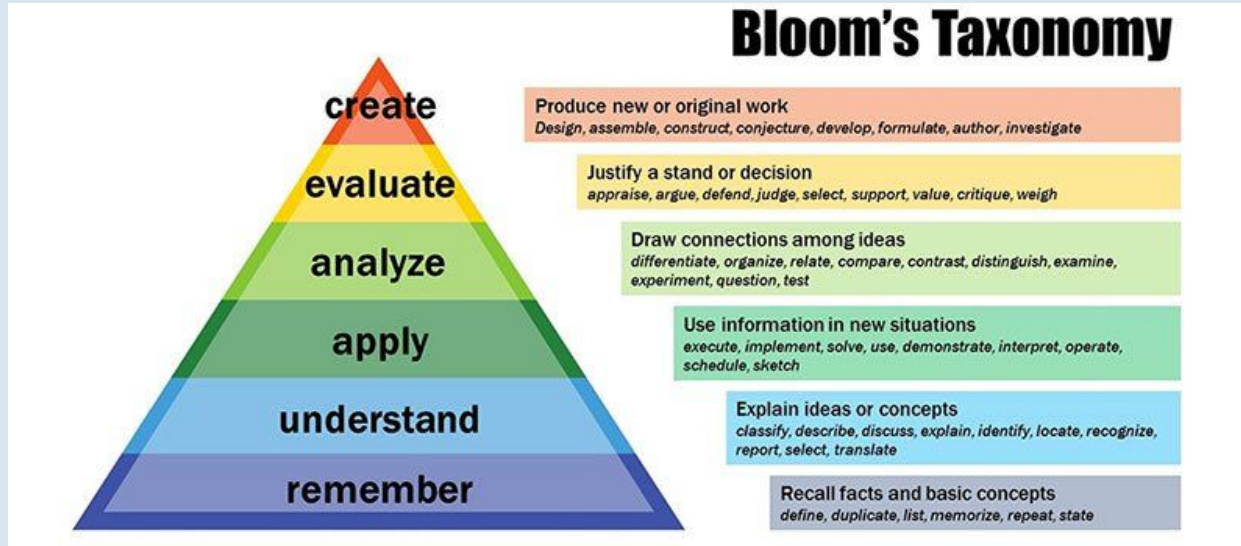
# What is active learning?



- Active learning includes any type of activity that engages students in learning beyond simply listening, reading, or memorizing.

# Why is active learning important?

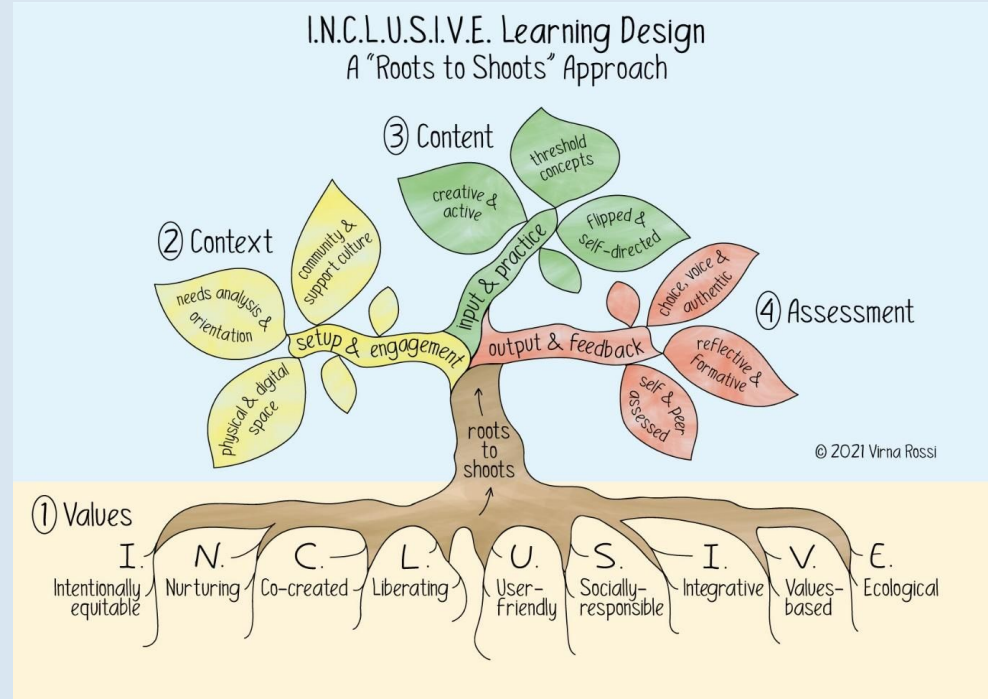
- The interactive nature of active learning modules may enable students to relate to their course material in a more meaningful way.



<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>

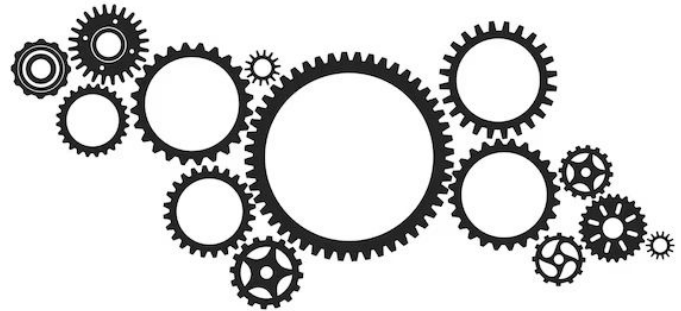
# Why is active learning important?

- Active learning is a more accessible and inclusive mode of learning for students from underrepresented demographics.
- Active learning can increase average grades and improve failure rates.



# Which activities constitute active learning?

- Active learning commonly includes student collaboration in pairs or groups, but independent writing or reflection activities are also actively engaging.
- It can begin by asking students to define what learning techniques they find useful and what their goals are and working with them.



# Activities

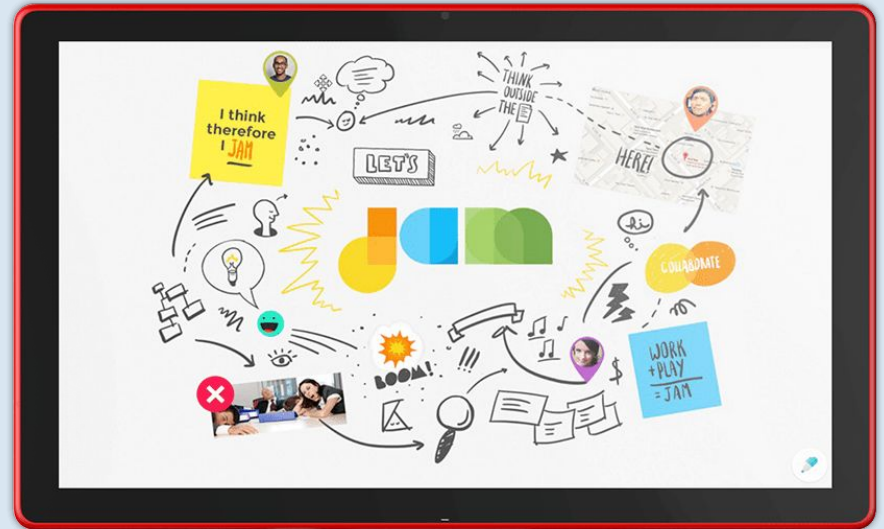
# Think-pair-share

- Think—allow students brief time to gather their thoughts
- Pair—pair or group students to discuss
- Share—ask groupings to share with the class
- Ensures that all students have an opportunity to discuss content
- Reduces pressure of individual participation



# Google Jamboard

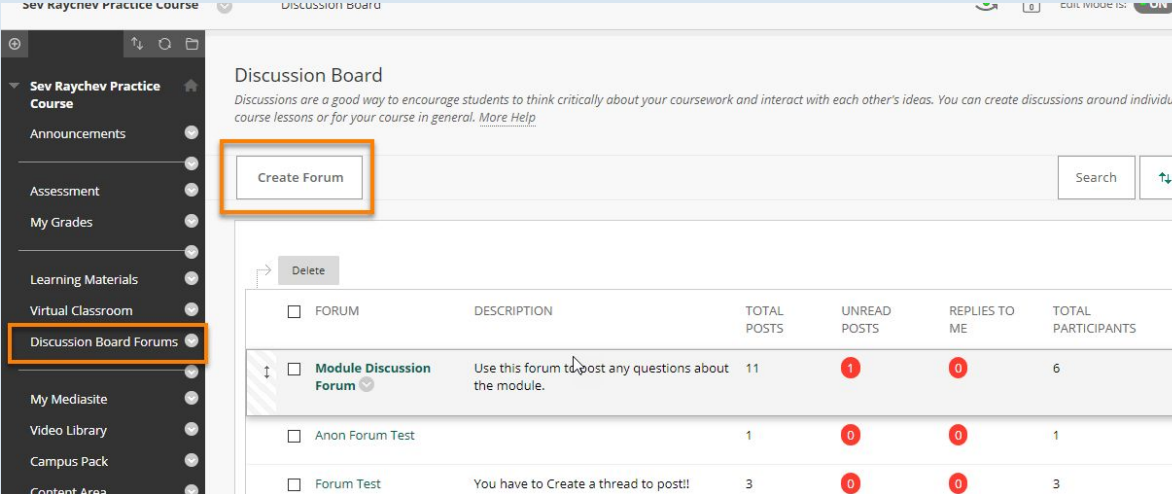
- Allows for anonymous sharing of ideas
- Class can see responses in real time





# Online discussion forums

- Automatically built-in to your blackboard class!
- A space for students to pose questions you can answer in class
- Can be mandatory (for participation) or optional (for extra credit)

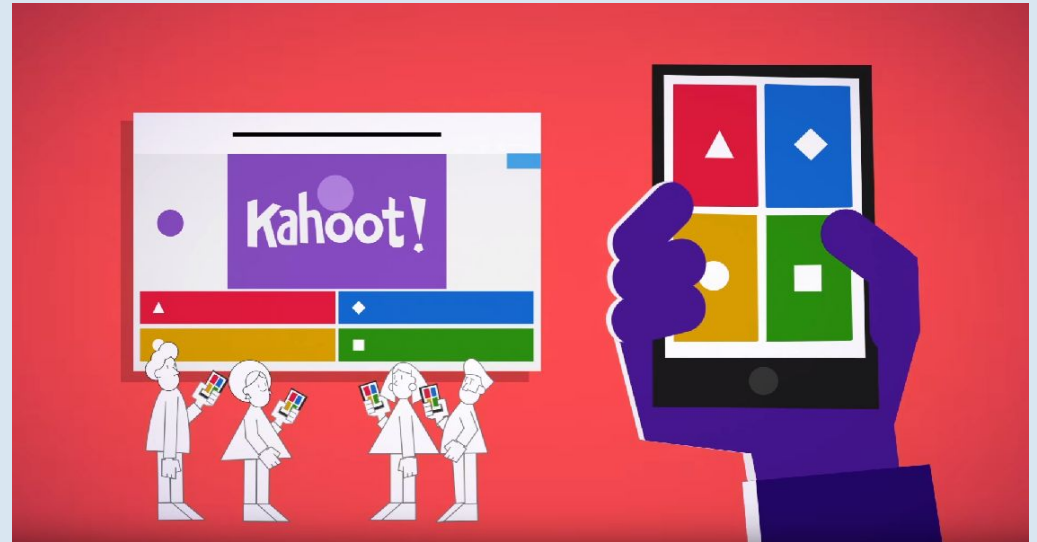
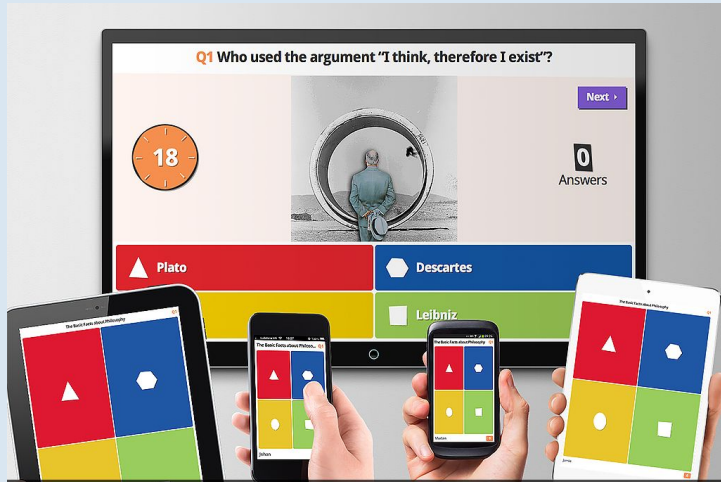


The screenshot displays the Blackboard Discussion Board interface for a course titled "Sev Raychev Practice Course". The sidebar on the left contains navigation options: Announcements, Assessment, My Grades, Learning Materials, Virtual Classroom, Discussion Board Forums (highlighted with an orange box), My Mediasite, Video Library, Campus Pack, and Content Area. The main content area shows the "Discussion Board" title and a description: "Discussions are a good way to encourage students to think critically about your coursework and interact with each other's ideas. You can create discussions around individual course lessons or for your course in general. [More Help](#)". Below this is a "Create Forum" button (highlighted with an orange box) and a search bar. A table lists existing forums with columns for Forum, Description, Total Posts, Unread Posts, Replies to Me, and Total Participants.

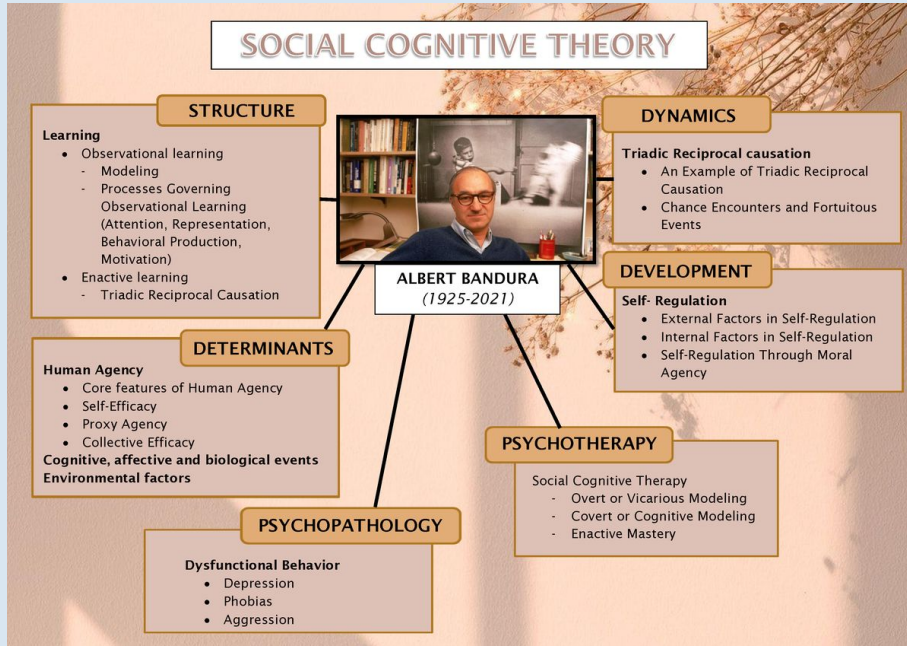
FORUM	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL POSTS	UNREAD POSTS	REPLIES TO ME	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
<input type="checkbox"/> Module Discussion Forum	Use this forum to post any questions about the module.	11	1	0	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Anon Forum Test		1	0	0	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Forum Test	You have to Create a thread to post!!	3	0	0	3

# Kahoot!

- A pre-assessment classic
- Good for exam review



# Concept Map



- This is a visual presentation of connections between different themes.
- Can be useful in teaching theory.

# Peer-reviewing assignments

- Students share outlines for their essays with their peers for feedback.
- This can be an discussion with a partner and the rest of the class, with guidance from the instructor.





Center for  
Teaching and  
Learning

# MINUTE PAPER

This activity gives students an opportunity to absorb and comprehend course material and allows you to gauge student comprehension.

## Sample Form: Minute Paper

1. What are the two (three, four, five) most significant (central, useful, meaningful, surprising, stimulating) things you have learned during this session?
2. What question(s) do you still have?



Near the end of the class session, or at the end of a topic discussion, ask students to write for one minute, summarizing the main 2-3 points of the class. (Sometimes, instead of asking for the main points, you may want to provide for the most disturbing or most surprising item.)



Collect the anonymous papers, look them over, and report back to the class during the next session. (No sign a student).



Use the reporting time to identify the main points from the previous class, and to deal up any misconceptions.

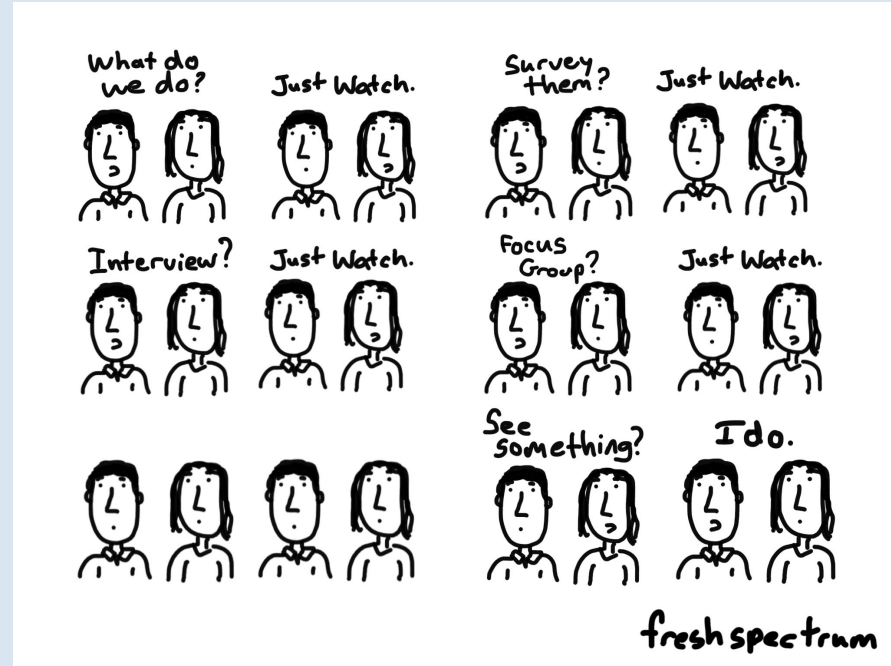
[nyit.edu/engage](http://nyit.edu/engage)

## Minute Paper

- This is a summary of the material taught in a class (lecture, presentation, podcasts, videos).
- The instructor can pose guiding questions for the students to reflect on.

# Project Based Learning

- Students practice disciplinary research methods with partners.
- These can include learning how to frame research and interview questions for their student projects.



## The Colonial Roots of Peru's Troubles

An archaeologist traces the current protests in Peru to exploitive labor policies enacted in silver mines during Spanish colonial rule from 1532 to 1800.

By SARAH A. KENNEDY  
1 MAR 2023



<https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/peruvian-colonial-mines>

## Newspaper discourse analysis

- Students bring in newspaper and magazine articles to discuss course themes.
- Can help students relate course material to current world events.



# Collaborative study guide

- Study guides can be turned into an active learning method for revisions before exams.
- Main terms can be defined by the instructor and students can then add their points from required texts.

**Study Guide!** *Handwritten stars: "READ AND STUDY"*

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_  
Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

What I need to help me study: \_\_\_\_\_

Important Vocabulary Words to Study:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Important Information I Need to Study:  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

Any Additional Notes or Reminders

*Handwritten star: "STUDY"*

Inspire Me, ASAP



# TEN CHAIRS OF INEQUALITY

A CLASSROOM SIMULATION ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

By Polly Kellogg



Credit: United For a Fair Economy

## Theater Exercises

- Theater exercises can be a fun way to approach complex concepts.
- Involves students enacting a scene or role playing to engage with a topic in a more relatable way.

# **Additional Considerations**

# Shy or quiet students

- Clearly articulate participation expectations on syllabus and in first class
- Offer alternatives:
  - Office hour chats
  - Discussion board posts
  - Option to hand in notes with questions and comments from class or readings
- Be aware that forcing participation (i.e., cold calling) can cause discomfort

# Orange SUccess

- Progress reports
  - Required twice during the semester
    - But can raise/remove flags at any time
  - Can raise concerns like non-attendance, low participation, etc.

Employee Home ▾

Orange SUccess



# Seating arrangements

- Encourage students to sit closer to the front, and to each other
- SU classrooms vary in size
- Caveat: In a post-pandemic world, you may not want to force students to cluster together

# Time limits

- Set them, state them
- Be flexible
- Have extra material in case class goes quicker than expected

# Silence

- Embrace it!
- Don't move on too quickly, first try to reframe the question

# Technology

- Can be useful for online activities (Jamboard, Kahoot), but can also be a distraction
- Outline phone and laptop policy on syllabus





# Presentation design

- Slides
  - Too much text can be distracting
  - Create slides that enhance, not detract from your teaching
- Creating accessible slides:
  - [CDR: “Creating Accessible PowerPoint Presentations”](#)

- Blackboard accessibility meter:



Low (0-36%)  
Needs help!



Medium (34-66%)  
A little better



High (67-99%)  
Almost there



Perfect (100%)  
Perfect

# Adaptability to online learning

- Breakout rooms
- Hide non-video participants, or require camera presence
- Ask questions; proceed as usual



# Main takeaways

- Research supports the benefits of active learning for student engagement and success
- There are a range of options for in-class engagement activities, but active learning can also happen outside the classroom—before or after class
- There are many miscellaneous considerations that can be tweaked and personalized to best fit the needs of *your* class

# Resources and contact info

- Syracuse's Certificate in University Learning (CUT) seminar series includes active learning workshops throughout the semester
- Blackboard for STEM presentation

## Questions or concerns? Reach out!

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Nimisha: [nithakur@syr.edu](mailto:nithakur@syr.edu)



# References

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- <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/teaching-ethnography-through-theater>
- <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/active-learning/>
- <https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/active-learning>
- <https://teaching.cornell.edu/teaching-resources/active-collaborative-learning/active-learning#:~:text=Active%20learning%20methods%20ask%20students,words%20through%20writing%20and%20discussion.>
- <https://cdn.vanderbilt.edu/vu-wp0/wp-content/uploads/sites/59/2019/04/22143029/Active-Learning-Cheat-Sheet.pdf>

# Active Learning in the Classroom

