

Active Teaching vs. Active Learning ©



Summary: There is no one best way to teach, just as there is not a single best way to learn. What education researchers and practitioners do widely agree on, though, is that the rote learning of content delivered in a lecture style rarely results in adequate understanding, retention, or utility. The growing attention to teaching 21st Century Skills is often coupled with an emphasis on student-centered instructional methods. This is true in most, if not all education settings. Many teachers struggle to use these methods, for a few reasons. One, they are not easy. Two, systemic pressures to complete often over-crowded curricula, to prepare students for fact-focused exams, and a lack of instructional materials, among other factors, undermine those attempts teachers might make. Three, both teachers and supervisors often mistake active teaching for student-centered learning. Active teaching is certainly better than simple lecturing. Indeed, it can be highly valuable. But it is NOT active learning.



Presently, we are concerned by...



which we should not confuse with...

Active Teaching

How does Active Learning strengthen students' capacity and performance?

Students get to feel, see, smell, hear & taste the abstract notions from their lessons, enabling them to learn from many different angles.

Students get to manipulate what they learn, both concretizing & deepening their understanding of the abstract information & skills of their lessons.

Students develop greater, clearer purpose in their studies (as do their parents) &, therefore, greater motivation & confidence to apply selves.



Active Teaching

A teacher who...

...is Enthusiastic

...assesses Learning

...uses diverse Methods

...asks Questions

...uses diverse Activities

...completes the Lessons

...stimulates Students to Work

...is Encouraging

...can Answer Questions

...keeps Students Busy

...uses many "Hands-On" Materials

This is clearly good, but ...

ACTIVE LEARNING

Children
who...

...are Busy

...Collaborate

...work in Silence

...are Enthusiastic

...make much
Noise

...ask Questions

...complete Lessons
(at own pace)

...Think

...Assess own (&
others') Work

...seek Information
(in many places)

...Encourage
each other

...Act

...discover own
Answers

...engage in
Trial & Error

...work
Independently



So, what we must conclude is that...

Active Teaching

...does not automatically, or necessarily, promote...



In fact, it might sometimes actually impede it.

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But how?

Consider:

If the teacher is asking questions, what is the student doing?

If the teacher is answering the hard questions, what is the student doing?

If the teacher is choosing everything to learn, what is the student doing?

If the teacher is stimulating the students to work, where does student self-motivation come from?

Techniques

ACTIVE LEARNING

Active Teaching

The Teacher...



Asks questions

Vs.

* Presents content, situations, etc. to students to prompt & encourage them to ask questions.

Provides correct answers

Vs.

* Guides & encourages students to strategies & resources to find correct answers on own, alone or as a group.

Conducts play for learning

Vs.

* Creates conditions & furnishes materials for students to organize & conduct their own learning play.

Reads many fun books

Vs.

* Provides materials & time for students to explore reading & read on own, including to each other.

Techniques (more)

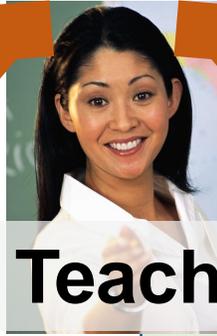
Active Teaching

Writes & produces plays, etc.

Assigns classroom tasks

Teaches songs

The Teacher...



ACTIVE LEARNING

* Helps students to create, produce and act in their own plays, ballets, concerts, etc..

* Guides students in identifying chores, in volunteering for assignments and in organizing work.

* Encourages children to learn & bring in songs from home to teach to each other.

Vs.

Vs.

Vs.

These are just illustrations of “teaching” for active learning. The system can provide many & more complete guidance, but we really aspire to teachers’ being “active” in devising, planning & testing their own techniques.