

Active Learning Strategies Cheat Sheet

All of these active learning experiences concludes with a class wide debriefing or other reporting mechanism. Instructor role is to help students synthesize their efforts in relation to the key concepts, practices or principles and skills that are the object of the session.

Peer-facilitated interaction

Ask students to work together as teams to accomplish a task. Peers will co-facilitate discussion and task management.

Content Type: Any topic.

Faculty Effort: Low (alignment with objectives/goals)

Student Effort: Low

Fun Factor: Medium-High (depends on scenario)

Think-Pair-Share

Students work in pairs to address an issue or engage in problem-solving. After consulting with one another, paired learners share with the larger class what they concluded and how they reached their conclusion. They may also share a lack of agreement and their disparate approaches.

Content Type: Any topic.

Faculty Effort: Low (alignment with objectives/goals)

Student Effort: Low

Fun Factor: Low-Medium (depends on scenario)

Role Play

Students are given parts to play in a scripted scenario. This may be done in pairs or small groups. At least one part is well-scripted. The goal is for learners to enact/apply key principles, and for observers to analyze or evaluate these, assess dynamics of the interaction, or address specific questions concerning the principles involved.

Content Type: Communication skills; patient safety; Constructive/Disruptive behaviors; peer teaching; patient education, etc.

Faculty Effort: Medium (requires drafting the script + aligning with objectives/goals)

Student Effort: Low

Fun Factor: Medium-High (depends on scenario)

Improv

What's the difference between a role play and an improv? In role play, at least one role is scripted in its entirety in terms of language and/or behavior. In an improv, there is no scripting. Rather learners are given goals, roles, objectives to perform as they see fit.

The instructor provides the context (sets the scene) and establishes goals for the outcome of the *improv*, or for each character (whether secretly with individual participants or as a group). Students may be

Active Learning Strategies Cheat Sheet

given a leading line or goal/objective that begins the interaction between 2 or more actors. Thus, it is up to the students to *improv* their parts to achieve the goals of the activity.

Content Type: Communication skills; patient safety; Constructive/Disruptive behaviors; peer teaching; patient education, etc.

Faculty Effort: Medium (requires planning for multiple enactments)

Student Effort: Medium (Requires creativity, reflection)

Fun Factor: High

Case-based Scenarios

Students work together in pairs or small groups (also can be done larger groups) to resolve a patient scenario. An effective case involves multiple perspectives on the problem, including the patient's, and invokes student use of knowledge, skills and standards of practice, ethics and/or professionalism.

Content Type: Any topic.

Faculty Effort: Medium (requires drafting cases + aligning with objectives/goals)

Student Effort: Low

Fun Factor: Medium-High (depends on scenario)

Simulation

Students will simulate actual practice or skill in realistic setting. Can be low (pretend patients) or high fidelity (mannequins as patients; standardized patients).

Content Type: Skills-based; application of any topic.

Faculty Effort: High (requires scripting and planning for multiple actors, iterations, debriefings + aligning with objectives/goals)

Student Effort: Medium, Requires creativity

Fun Factor: High

Escape Room

Escape rooms are meant to be positively competitive, promote teamwork and feel like fun. Students work in teams on several tasks during a live session. As a team completes a task, they are free to move on to the next task. If they complete all of the tasks early (before the session ends) they will be allowed to "escape" the room.

This "escape" translates to some learner benefit, such as, having free time, participation points, bonus points on a quiz or exam,, etc. Some instructors hand out treats (cookies, candy, coffee) as a way to motivate students to succeed. You can modify the rewards aspect of this method to promote peer teaching. For example, learners could earn the title of "instructor" when they reach the escape hatch and run the debrief on the topic at the end of the session.

When a team completes a task incorrectly, the instructor can impose a "time out" (where they do not return to work on the problem for 1m). The instructor may indicate what is incorrect. The team cannot talk during the timeout except to ask the instructor for guidance in a Q&A Process. For example,

Active Learning Strategies Cheat Sheet

learners may ask specific questions and the instructor must provide direct answers to their questions. When the 1 minute is up, the team returns to their space/table to continue working on the problem and present it again upon completion. Once each task is complete, a team is given the next problem or task.

Content Type: Skills-based; application of any topic.

Faculty Effort: High (create tasks that, when taken together, convey the skills or concepts you want the students to learn; provide live, in-session feedback and guidance to multiple teams; monitor performance throughout the session; coordinate the debrief and offer feedback to wrap-up the session)

Student Effort: Medium (Requires teamwork, creative problem-solving)

Fun Factor: High

Jigsaw Method

The Jigsaw Method promotes peer collaboration and teaching and encourages an organized, team approach to making sense of key concepts and/or problem-solving involving those key concepts. This is a productive strategy for use in interprofessional as well as intraprofessional learning.

The instructor assigns learners to groups/teams, each group is assigned a number or letter. Each group in the classroom works on a different aspect of a problem, reading or case. These are called homogenous groups because they deal with only one aspect of the problem and focus on only one skill, standard or knowledge area.

The instructor establishes the time these group will have to find/review resources and make sense of the key concepts or skills. Then, each group will begin to generate ideas on how they would use this knowledge or skills to address a problem or case.

When the time ends, a member from each team will form a new group with one member from each of the other groups. These new teams are called heterogeneous groups and will tackle the same problem, bringing to their new group the expertise they garnered from discussions with their homogenous group and learning new knowledge or skills and perspectives from peers from other groups.

Each team must attempt to reach consensus upon a solution or approach. Where they cannot, the team identifies the points of disagreement and attempts to identify why they have reached an impasse. Team members are accountable for their contributions. For example, they should provide sources to verify their knowledge or perspective. Heterogeneous teams will present their proposed solution or approach to the problem/case to the larger group for discussion.

BONUS ADAPTATION: In the large group discussion, groups could discuss the dynamics of homogenous versus heterogeneous groups, benefits as well as challenges encountered in each group type, contributions and resources that experts from homogeneous groups brought to the heterogeneous group discussions, and the impact of having access to different perspectives, knowledge and skill on decision-making or reaching a consensus.

Video LINK LINK2 **Content Type:** Any topic.

Faculty Effort: Medium (requires drafting a problem or scenario aligned with learning objectives)

Student Effort: Medium (requires verifying knowledge)

Fun Factor: Medium-High

Active Learning Strategies Cheat Sheet

Socratic Circles

You can use Socratic Circles as part of a flipped learning session or live active learning session. The difference lies in whether you ask students to prepare for participating before or IN the session. Some proponents of flipped learning call this Flipping IN the Classroom as opposed to flipping the classroom.

However you choose to do it, the Socratic Circle is a way to engage learners in a robust discussion about important issues.

The instructor randomly (or otherwise) divides the class into Groups A and B. Seats are arranged in two concentric circles. The instructor directs Group A to sit in the inner circle and Group B to sit in the outer circle.

Inner Circle: Students in Group A read a statement, standard, rule, scenario or problem out loud, and discuss it in their circle. Time: 10 minutes

Outer Circle: The task for learners in the outer circle is to observe the inner circle's discussion and assess how the discussion is conducted, points of agreement, disagreement or contention. They also identify instances of interest. These may include language used, inflection, tone, body language or other behaviors. At the conclusion of the inner circle's 10 minute discussion, the outer circle (Group B) offers their observations and/or feedback based upon their observations to Group A (the inner circle). (Time: 5 minutes + 5 minutes for Group A to respond and both groups to discuss.)

Time permitting, the instructor may direct the groups to switch circle and offer a new problem utilizing the same process. This ensures that both groups have an opportunity to observe and offer feedback as well as to discuss and receive feedback. See the endnote for role descriptions.ⁱ

[LINK](#) **Adaptation:** [Video describes 4 variations on Socratic Circles](#)

Content Type: Ethics; behavioral issues, managerial issues; patient safety; communication; any topic up for debate or where discussion/debate will supply a teachable moment.

Faculty Effort: Medium (crafting scenario for and monitoring discussion; offering live feedback)

Student Effort: HIGH (creativity; reflective participation; live sourcing of information/standards)

Fun Factor: High

Debate

This active learning strategy requires higher order thinking and strategic planning. Learners will be asked to argue in favor or and against particular approaches or premises. It is helpful to assign students to the side of the argument with which they least agree. This requires more effort and creativity to devise an argument and strategically map out the pathway to success in the debate. It also reinforces a practice of reflection in the learning and peer teaching process.

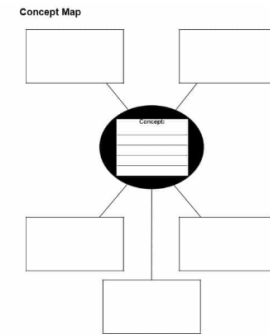
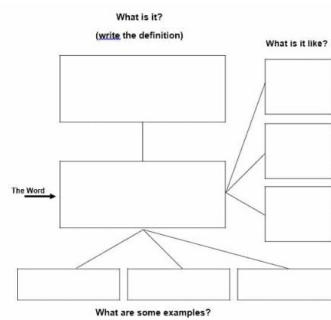
[LINK](#) **Content Type:** Ethics; behavioral issues, managerial issues; patient safety; communication; any topic up for debate or where discussion/debate will supply a teachable moment.

Faculty Effort: Low **Student Effort:** Low-Medium **Fun Factor:** High

Active Learning Strategies Cheat Sheet

Concept Mapping

A concept map depicts key concepts and their relationships to one another. There are a variety of ways to organize concept maps: spider; flowchart (both at right) and hierarchy; systems). Students can work in small groups to create a concept map, first selecting an appropriate type, then identifying concepts involved and drawing how they are related. Then, students list definitions and describe examples of these concepts or how they are applied.



LINK Content Type: Any topic; particularly helpful in facilitating student understanding of foundational concepts and relationships among these.

Faculty Effort: Low

Student Effort: Medium

Fun Factor: High

ⁱ ROLES for Socratic Circle Participants

Instructor: The instructor facilitates the participation of Groups A & B and assists leaders only as necessary. They do not act as leader and do not directly facilitate discussion.

Group Leader A: Each group determines who will be the group leader by whatever method they deem appropriate. The inner circle leader's role is to facilitate discussion of the content assigned. Their aim is to direct the group toward a thoughtful, productive discussion of ideas. This might involve redirecting the group when they go off-topic, re-reading the case or problem, remind them, or asking group members to clarify or distill what the problem or question is they are attempting to address. A leader should endeavor to use questions, rather than statements or directives, when engaging their group.

Group Leader B: The outer circle leader's role is to guide participants in compiling a list of observations that will be conveyed to the inner circle and encourage/guide the group in taking a productive approach to conveying their observations and feedback when they discuss these with the inner circle.

Group A Members: Inner circle participants may locate resources and convey information to support the group process or to inform the direction of the group's discussion.

Group B Members: The outer circle participants may identify resources that describe professional standards or norms of behavior to assist in conveying observations/feedback to the inner circle.