Ideas for Learning Activities

Activity Idea

Whiteboard Brainstorm

- Teacher writes a new concept/topic on the board that is to be learnt about.
- Using multiple whiteboard markers all students are to write what they understand or contribute ideas about the topic/concept on the board.
- Everyone has to contribute at least once.
- Discussion to follow about relevance, connections and ideas provided. Students can explain their contribution if unclear.

Speed Dating

- Using the concept of speed dating, students have a short timeframe (defined by teacher) to interview, question or practise information with another learner. They will do this multiple times with different students.
- Students meet with or ('date') other students, by moving around a group or room. This can be structured or loose. But the idea is that students will encounter different students and information at each 'dating experience'.
- Always allow time for reflection and feedback after each 'dating experience'.
- Restrictions can be placed on each 'date': e.g. with notes on first 'date', no notes on second, voice expression on third 'date' etc.
- The time frame can be altered as Students get more proficient.

Matrix

- Learners create a table with information to compare (i.e. pros/cons, two different processes).

Item, concept, process	Value of item, concept process	Limitation of item, concept, process	Application use, timing, etc.
Concept 1			
Concept 2			

- Ask students to work in groups (2-4) to fill out the table.
- Have groups share their ideas with the class and make notes on the board.

Minute Paper

- At the end of a learning session or class, have students spend two or three minutes writing a summary of the main points OR answering the following questions: "What is the most important thing you learnt today in this class?" and "What important question remains unanswered?"
- Ask at least one learner to share what he/she wrote.

- Collect the papers for review (but not for a grade).

You can also use the minute paper to have learners to write down questions they have about the lecture, 3 key points of the day, indicate points they don't understand, or share feedback about your delivery, use of slides, etc.

Think Aloud Inquiry

- Present an appropriate discipline-related problem that can be solved in a relatively short time frame.
- Next, literally talk aloud in front of students how you would go about engaging the problem, e.g. "Okay, for this particular problem, first I need to clarify the nature of the problem. Do I understand what is at stake? From what is given here, I understand it to involve x, y, z. Given this, the next thing I need to do is consider. . ." And so on. The idea is to demonstrate explicitly your thinking process (or a formal process of inquiry) so that students can literally observe/hear "thinking in action."
- Students form pairs and assume the roles of "problem-solver" and "listener."
- Present a problem for them to solve. The "problem-solver" reads the problem aloud and talks through the reasoning process in attempting to solve it.
- The role of the "listener" is to encourage the problem-solver to think aloud. The listener can also ask clarifying questions or offer suggestions but should not actually solve the problem.
- Present yet another problem and have students switch roles.
- After an allotted amount of time, have student pairs share their experience. Did they actually solve the problems? What obstacles or breakthroughs did they encounter? How did it feel to talk aloud or listen to "thinking in action"?

Group Graphic

- Have students get in pairs or small groups.
- Ask the pairs or groups to illustrate content learnt by constructing a picture, diagram, flowchart, concept map, or some other visual illustration that represents their understanding of the content.
- Have students report on their group graphic to the rest of the class, explaining what is represented and why (their representation might also include questions, unknowns, etc.).
- Have other groups respond with questions, feedback or suggestions, and you can also provide feedback to help clarify questions, point out misconceptions or oversimplifications, or correct errors.
- You can also have groups turn in their illustrations for you to scrutinize after class and later hand back with feedback.

Concept Map

- Provide students with a list of terms relative to their course work (either from the previous class, last several classes or most recent lecture segment). Terms may be provided as a list or given out as a stack of cards.
- Ask students to create a meaningful pattern with these terms (e.g. food web – how are different organisms linked, cardiovascular system blood flow, etc.). There may be one "right" answer of the concepts may promote creative exploration of the topic.
- If time allows, ask one group to share concept map with the whole class. Or alternatively, ask groups to explain their pattern to another group in the class.

Jigsaw groups

- Divide class into small groups.
- Provide each group with a topic relevant to the day's lesson.

- Ask each group to develop knowledge about the topic and discuss creative ways of teaching the topic to others.
- Re-group students so that each group consists of students who have developed expertise in a different topic.
- Each student in their group then teachers the others in their group about their topic.
- Students return to their original group and compile a quiz (questions and answers) for the class to determine levels of learning and understanding.

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Test Taking Groups

- Organize students into groups of four.
- Provide time in class for groups to meet and determine how they will study for an upcoming test.
- Administer the test for students to complete individually and to submit for instructor grading.
- Before returning the graded individual tests, ask students to return to their groups and take the test again as a team, reaching consensus on each question.
- Have students compare their results with the group's results.

Appointment Conversations

- This is a method of getting students to work with people they wouldn't ordinarily work with and also gets students moving around a room. It can be set up at the start of the lesson, and referred to throughout the lesson.
- Teachers provide or students create an appointment card. 8am, 9am, 10am etc.
- Students then mill around the room and book appointments with each other.
- As pair conversations need to happen through the lesson, the teacher asks them to meet their 10am appointment to have the discussion or partake in a quiz etc.

Quick Presentations

- To improve verbal communication and presentation skills, 'Teach the class something in 30 seconds'.
- It is important that the thing to teach them is something that the student knows something about.
- Give students 10 minutes to prepare.

Group Investigation

- Have students brainstorm potential topics.
- Select topics for investigation from the list that students generated.
- Form groups based on topic interest.
- Give groups time to formulate their research questions, choose their method of investigation, divide up and assign tasks, etc.
- Have groups prepare and present their final reports.

E-Portfolio
- Using an e-portfolio, students record their own learning and development by taking photographs (of themselves or others) and making relevant and reflective anecdotal comments/descriptions.
- Framework, guidelines or checklist are provided for focus.
- Strategic or intermittent deadlines are provided if over a longer time period to keep students tracking.
- www.pathbrite.com

Co-Create a Course Component

- Post/distribute a set of course objectives
- Assign pairs of students to be responsible for a set of objectives
- Ask pairs to research and provide content for their component
- Content is assembled and becomes a unique, class text

Facebook Page

- Teachers administer a Facebook Page for students to use as a sharing platform for commenting on tasks, files and as a place for sharing online resources.
- Students can upload and share relevant links for the wider class; you tube videos, research papers, photos and experiences.
- Could be project based or course based.

Reflective Jigsaw

- Students reflect on previous course or previous years learning by recording in small groups what they recall from each course on a paper jigsaw piece.
- These are then labeled with each of the courses from semester one.
- In their groups, students brainstorm, reflect on and document the learning and knowledge they had gained in the course.
- Once finished students share their reflection with the rest of the class, before grouping or displaying their jigsaw pieces on the wall. Thereby piecing some of the puzzle together.

Kahoots

- Quizzes, surveys and discussions that can be created online at https://getkahoot.com/
- Students link into the Kahoot via their mobile at https://kahoot.it/#/ and use their mobile as their buzzer/selection on the kahoot.
- Teachers can create new Kahoots or use existing Kahoots.
- Can be used to reinforce prior learning, consolidate new learning, stimulate discussions etc.

Pause Procedure

Mini-lectures are interspersed with pauses. These strategic pauses provide an opportunity for students to review and clarify course material. Students can develop a list of questions from the content covered in an out-of-class reading or video for the teacher to answer during the lecture. These questions can be interwoven into the 'pauses.'

What, So What, Now What? (W3)

What? Individuals work 1 min. alone reflecting on the following questions:

a. What happened? What did you notice, what facts/observations stood out?
b. Ask students to share with 2 other people (small groups of 3) 2-7 min.
c. Salient facts from small groups shared with the whole group and collected. 2-3 min.

2. **So What?** People work 1 min alone on *"Why is that important? What patterns or conclusions are emerging? What hypotheses can I/we make?"* then 2-7 min in small group.
a. Salient patterns, hypotheses and conclusions from small groups are shared with the whole group and collected. 2-5 min.

3. **Now What?** Participants work 1 min. alone on *"Now what? What actions make sense?"* then 2-7 min. in small group.

a. Actions are shared with the whole group, discussed and collected. Additional insights are invited. 2-10 min.

Think, Pair, Share
- Pose an engaging question, problem or display a provocative picture for students to consider.
- Give students a few minutes to think about their response.
- Ask students to pair up with another student and share, compare and contrast their ideas.

25/10 Crowdsourcing

- *Focusing Question*: "If you were ten times bolder, what big idea would you recommend for … (*insert challenge here)*?"
- Have each student write on an index card his/her bold idea. (3 min)
- Conduct five 3-minute exchange-and-scoring rounds (15 min)

- Students to mill around or stand in circle and pass cards from person to person to quickly review (1 min). When a sound is made, the students stop passing cards and pair up to exchange thoughts on the cards in their hands. Then students individually rate the idea/step on their card with a score of 1 to 5 (1 = low, 5 = high) and write it on the back of

- the card. Repeat with passing cards around and scoring for a total of five cycles.
- Ask students to add the 5 scores on the back of the card they are holding. Find the best-scoring ideas with the whole. Stop when the top ten ideas have been identified and shared. (5 – 7 min)
- End by asking: What caught your attention about 25/10? (2 min)

TRIZ
- Ask students to brainstorm the following question: *How can we ensure failure?* (5 min.) This can be made specific to a relevant context. Have the group pick the most unwanted result.
   Use 1-2-4-all for each of the following steps:
- Have each group make a list of all it can do to make sure that it achieves the most unwanted result (10 min)
- Have groups go down the list, item by item, and ask themselves, *"Is there anything that we are currently doing that in any way, shape or form resembles this item?"*
- Create a second list of all the things the group is currently doing (e.g. counterproductive activities/courses/procedures) (10 min)
- Go through the items on the second list and decide what first steps will help stop creating the undesirable results (10 min)

Tips:
- Don't accept ideas for doing something new or additional: be sure suggestions are about stopping activities or behaviours, not about starting new things
- Begin with a VERY unwanted result, quickly confirm your suggestion with the group
- Make real decisions about what will be stopped (number your decisions 1, 2, 3. . .) in the form of "I will stop" and "we will stop."

Sequence Chains

- Set a time limit, and provide groups of students with a scrambled list of items/events.
- Ask students to work together to arrange items into a sequence and explain the relationship between them.
- Ask students to draw their sequences on a flip-chart around the room.
- Close the activity with a large group discussion asking teams to report out on their analysis, organization and relationship of items.

1-2-4-All
- Ask a question in response to the presentation of an issue, or about a problem to resolve or a proposal put forward (e.g. what opportunities do YOU see for making progress on this challenge? How would you handle this situation? What ideas or actions do you recommend?)
- Start alone, then in pairs, then in foursomes and finally as a whole group
- Steps:
- Silent reflection by individuals on a shared challenge, framed as a question – 1 min
- Generate ideas in pairs, building on ideas from self-reflection – 2 min
- Share and develop ideas from your pair in foursomes (notice similarities and differences) – 4 min
- Ask, "What is one idea that stood out in your conversation?" Each group shares one important idea with all (repeat the cycle as needed) – 5 min

Correct the Error
- Using material from an immediate or recent session present students (individually or groups) with a statement, equation, or visual that you have intentionally made incorrect, have them correct the error. The error may be an illogical or inaccurate statement, premise, inference, prediction, or implication.
- Allow students a couple of minutes to reflect on the error before surveying their responses.
- Ask students to share their solution to the error.

Reorder the Steps

- Using material from an immediate or recent session present sequence items in the wrong order and have students re-order the sequence correctly. This might be a process, cycle, method, plan, technique, etc.
- Allow students a couple of minutes to reflect on the error before surveying their responses.
- Ask students to share their thinking.

Pair Essays

- Outside of class, students reflect on course content from a previously covered learning activity (lecture, reading, film, etc.), then formulate and write an essay question.
- Students

What do you see?

- Using material from an immediate or recent session present students with an image, such as a picture, symbol, graphic, equation, etc. and ask them "What do you see?" The image can be something new or familiar to students.
- The idea is to ascertain if they can identify noticeable patterns, discrepancies, unusual features, and so on.
- You can also present an intentionally altered image to determine if students can identify what is wrong or missing or suggest how to correct it.
- Allow students a couple of minutes to reflect on the image before surveying their responses.
- Ask students to share their thinking.

Complete a Sentence Stem

- Using material from an immediate or recent session present students (individually or groups) with a sentence starter and have them complete the sentence. The completed statement may be a definition, category, cause-and-effect relationship, rationale, controversy, etc.
- **TIP**: *Try to avoid statements that ask for rote knowledge.*
- Allow students a couple of minutes to reflect on the sentence stem before surveying their responses.
- Ask students to share their thoughts.

Dialogue Journals

- Ask students to maintain a record of their thoughts in a journal, while they are completing a required reading.
- Provide questions to guide reflection.
- Several times through the term, ask students to exchange their journal with other students.
- Students are asked to provide comments and ask questions in each other's journals in support of their own and their peer's learning.

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- It can be set up at the start of the lesson, and referred to throughout the lesson.
- Teachers provide or students create an appointment card. 8am, 9am, 10am, etc.
- Students then mill around the room and book appointments with each other. What the content of the meeting is about at this stage is unknown.
- As pair conversations need to happen through the lesson, the teacher asks them to meet their 10am appointment to have the discussion or partake in a quiz, etc.

Stories/ Case study stories
- Straw poles to help develop opinions on relevant issues in the industry.
- Stories that relate back to industry and relevance of current learning in class.
- Scenario exploration
- Informal Discussions
- Case Studies as stories relevant to industry and teacher experience.
- Ask for Student Stories from placements, work experience and industry experience.