

# Active and Collaborative Learning

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*“What is the most effective method of  
teaching?....*

*Students teaching other students”*

*McKeachie et al., 2002*

# Characteristics of active and collaborative learning

- “Collaborative learning is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students”. Smith and MacGregor (1992)
- The focus is on **intentional** group activities
- Teachers select from a range of pre-structured activities or by creating their own activities and assignments.

Shifting responsibility to students and having the classroom vibrate with lively work is attractive, but is educationally meaningless if students are not achieving intended instructional goals.

- Collaborative learning is **co-laboring**, i.e. all participants in the group must engage actively in working together toward the stated objectives.
- Students must increase their knowledge or deepen their understanding of course curriculum.

# What is an active and collaborative learning

- Collaborative learning, then, is two or more students laboring together and sharing the workload equitably as they progress toward intended learning outcomes.

# Common Problems and Potential Solutions

- Resistance to group work
- Poor interpersonal skills
- Off-Task behavior
- Groups that don't get along
- Groups in which several or no students want to assume leadership
- Different ability levels

***If teachers design effective learning environment  
and construct good tasks, many of these  
problems can be avoided***

# Discussion and Activities

Pairs address common problems / share back

Quick activities

- a
- b
- c

Activities requiring more planning

- x
- y
- z

# Endnote: Theoretical, Pedagogical Rationale for Collaborative Learning

- Students learn by integrating new information into their existing understandings (Paulo Freire, 1970; Nash, 1997)
- Students learn through imitating others (Albert Bandura's, 1977)
- Students learn through interacting with others (Palinscar et al., 1989; Topping, 1996)
- Students learn when they seek understanding (Ramsden, 1992)

# Endnote: evidence that collaborative learning promotes and improves learning

- CL correlates positively with cognitive outcomes (Springer et al., 1999; Romero, 2009).
- CL correlates positively with student engagement, attitudes, persistence and personal development (Austin, 1993; Light, 2001; Springer et al., 1998).
- CL is good educational practice (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Ambrose et al., 2010; Barkley, 2004).
- CL is beneficial for a wide range of students (Annis, 1983; McKeachie et al., 1986).
- CL is valued by both students and teachers (McKeachie et al., 1986; Fiechtner and Davis, 1992).



Thank you