

Providing Students Multiple Opportunities to Practice and Respond: A List of Activities

These activities can increase student engagement in the learning process and assess student mastery of the concept or skill being taught.

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
12-word summary	In 12 or fewer words, students summarize important aspects of a particular chunk of instruction or reading.
3-2-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students write 3 ideas, concepts, or issues presented. • Students write 2 examples or uses of idea or concept. • Students write 1 unresolved question or a possible confusion.
3-minute pause	<p>Students stop, reflect on the concepts and ideas just introduced, make connections to prior knowledge or experience, and seek clarification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I changed my attitude about... • I became more aware of... • I was surprised about... • I felt... • I related to... • I empathized with...
Analogy prompt	Periodically, present students with an analogy: [A concept, principle, or process] is like _____ because...
Choral response	In response to a cue, all students respond verbally at the same time. The response can be either to answer a question or to repeat something the teacher has said.
Circular check	Students in groups are given a problem with a definite answer. The first student completes the first step without contribution from others in the group and passes it to the next student. The second student corrects any mistakes and completes the next step, again without input from the group. The problem gets passed to the next student, and the process continues until the group has the correct answer.
Class vote	Present several possible answers or solutions to a question or problem and have students vote on what they think is best.

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Concept mapping	Explain and model a concept map. After the lecture, explanation, or reading, have students fill in a concept map (with a partner or individually) and report out.
Debriefing	Use this form of reflection immediately following an activity.
Exit card	Exit cards are written student responses to questions posed at the end of a class or learning activity or at the end of a day.
Flash cards	After 10 minutes into a lecture or concept presentation, have students create a flash card that contains the key concept or idea. Toward the end of the class, have students work in pairs to exchange ideas and review the material.
Four corners	Post questions, concepts, or vocabulary words in each of the corners of the room. Assign each student a corner. Once in the corner, students discuss the focus of the lesson in relation to the question, concept, or words. Students may report out or move to another corner and repeat. After students have moved, as a writing assignment, they reflect on changes in opinion or what they have learned.
Give one, get one	Give students papers and ask students to list three to five ideas about the learning. Students draw a line after their last idea to separate their ideas from other classmates'. Students get up and interact with one classmate at a time. Students exchange papers, read their partner's list, and then ask questions about new or confusing ideas.
Idea spinner	Create a spinner with four quadrants labeled "Predict," "Explain," "Summarize," and "Evaluate." After presenting new material, spin the spinner and ask students to answer a question based on the location of the spinner. For example, if the spinner lands in the "Summarize" quadrant, say, "List the key concepts just presented."
Idea wave	Each student lists three to five ideas about the assigned topic. One volunteer begins the "idea wave" by sharing his or her idea. The student to the right of the volunteer shares one idea. The teacher directs the idea wave until several different ideas have been shared. At the end of the formal idea wave, a few volunteers who were not included may contribute.

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Index card summaries and questions	<p>Periodically, distribute index cards and ask students to write on both sides, with these instructions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side 1: Based on our study of [topic], list a big idea that you understand and word it as a summary statement. • Side 2: Identify something about [topic] that you do not yet fully understand and word it as a statement or question.
Journal entry	Students record in a journal their understanding of the topic, concept, or lesson taught. Review the entry to see whether the student understands.
Learning cell	Students develop questions and answers on their own. Working in pairs, the first student asks a question, the partner answers, and vice versa. Each student can correct the other until a satisfactory answer is reached.
Misconception check	Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a designated concept, principle, or process. Ask students whether they agree or disagree and to explain why. This activity can also be presented in the form of a multiple-choice or true-false quiz.
Muddiest point	Ask students to write the “muddiest” point in the lesson (up to that point, what was most unclear).
1-minute paper	Decide on the focus of the paper. Ask students “What was the most important thing you learned? What important question remains unanswered?” Set aside 5–10 minutes of the next class to discuss.
1-minute essay	Ask a focused question with a specific goal that can be answered within a minute.
Pinch/response cards	Pose a question and ask students to “pinch” the correct response and hold up their cards. It is then easy to scan the room to see which students need more instruction. Pinch cards are best suited for questions with one-word answers (true/false, yes/no/maybe, agree/disagree, fact/opinion, multiply/divide/subtract/add, etc.).
Portfolio check	Check the progress of a student’s portfolio. A portfolio is a purposeful collection of significant work—carefully selected, dated, and presented—to tell the story of a student’s achievement or growth. A portfolio usually includes student explanations of why each piece was chosen and what it shows about his or her growing skills and abilities.

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Quick class check	Give students paper plates, index cards, a whiteboard, or large sheets of paper. When asking a question, have all students write the answer and then, at the signal, hold up the object, so you can easily scan answers.
Quick write	Students write for 2–3 minutes about a lecture or reading.
Self-assessment	Students collect information about their own learning, analyze what it reveals about their progress toward learning goals, and plan the next steps in their learning.
Signal cards and hand signals	Create cards to check for understanding. Green means, “I got it,” yellow means “I’m not sure,” and blue means “I’m lost.” Or have students display a designated hand signal to indicate their understanding of a specific concept, principal, or process. For example, thumbs-up means, “I understand and can explain it,” thumbs-down means “I do not yet understand,” and waving means “I’m not completely sure.”
Student conference	Have a one-on-one conversation with students to check their level of understanding.
Tickets to enter and exit	Ask students a question about the lesson. Students then write their answer on a ticket and give the ticket to the teacher, either on their way out or on their way in the next day. Use the tickets to evaluate the need to reteach or address questions.
Transfer and apply	Students list interesting ideas, strategies, and concepts learned in class. Students then write some possible ways to apply this learning in their lives, another class, or in their community.
Web or concept map	Any of several forms of graphic organizers that allow learners to perceive relationships between concepts through diagramming key words representing those concepts