Published on *University of Colorado* (https://www.cu.edu)

Designing Active Learning for the Online Classroom Part 3 [1]

August 28, 2018 by Glenda Robertson | College of Nursing at CU Anschutz [2]

This blog post is the third in a series about active learning course design.

The first post provided an evidence-based perspective on how moving from a lecture paradigm design to an active learning design improves student learning.
The second post offered design considerations and examples for incorporating active learning into the face-to-face classroom.

Many of the face-to-face classroom design considerations hold true for the online classroom. This third post will explore additional design considerations for active learning online.

Once again, the design concepts are organized around the questions of who, what, when, where, and why. The goal is to provide key design concepts to consider before choosing the "right" active learning strategy.

Who are your learners?

Consider finding out the answer to questions such as:

- Are they digital immigrants or digital natives?
- Are they ready for online learning?
- How will they access the course?

In addition to knowing generational preferences and what prior learned knowledge, skills, and attitudes students bring to your classroom, attention should be paid to students' previous experience with online courses, if they will be using desktops, laptops, tables, and/or mobile phones to access the course, and how to make the course accessible to all learners, regardless of any specific disability. The answers to these questions will influence the overall course design as well as the design of specific active learning activities.

What type of online class are you teaching?

- 100% asynchronous
- 100% synchronous
- Combination of asynchronous and synchronous
- Hybrid/Blended

It is important that formative and summative activities help students intentionally achieve one or more of the course objectives/outcomes. Additionally, possessing a clear vision of how you and your students will interact with the activities and with each other will help you choose an

appropriate active learning strategy.

When will active learning take place?

Planning and pacing are key considerations in designing online active learning activities. Planning out the topic sequence over the length of the course sets the stage for determining when students are exposed to enough content to be able to do something with that content. Pacing learning activities allows time and space for students to meaningfully complete the activity, faculty to provide meaningful feedback, and for students to utilize feedback provided when completing the next activity.

Where will active learning take place?

Students in online courses may reside in many different locations locally, nationally, and internationally. The key is to design active learning activities that are specific to the course outcome(s) they measure while allowing for some flexibility in completing the activity. For example, asking students to photograph how far a bus stop is in relation to a pharmacy, a grocery story, etc., is a nice way for students to examine health disparities. This activity may need to look slightly different, however, if a student is in a rural or remote location.

Why use active learning strategies in online classes?

My first post in this active learning series provides a primer on the research that supports utilizing active learning strategies when designing your course be it a face to face course or an online course. Please refer back to that post for the evidence behind utilizing active learning design strategies.

Next Steps

Now that you've considered who, what, when, where, and why, you are ready to choose an active learning strategy for your online class. The Illinois Online Network created a comprehensive list at http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/otai/ I [3] hope you find this list helpful as you incorporate active learning into your online classroom.

In an upcoming post, I'll examine how to evaluate active learning activities.

Glenda Robertson MA,RN, is an Instructional Designer in the College of Nursing at CU Anschutz.

Display Title:
Designing Active Learning for the Online Classroom Part 3
Send email when Published:
Yes

Source URL:https://www.cu.edu/blog/online-teaching-blog/designing-active-learning-online-classroom-part-3

Links
[1] https://www.cu.edu/blog/online-teaching-blog/designing-active-learning-online-classroom-part-3
[2] https://www.cu.edu/blog/online-teaching-blog/author/55317 [3]
http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/otai/ I