Are you a User Group User?

The Northwest Quadrant debut of a bi-monthly User Group for exchange of practices and strategies among instructors in the NWQ active learning classrooms is THIS Friday, February 13th.

Current and future NWQ ALC instructors are encouraged to attend along with other active learning instructors across campus.

- What is working well in your active learning classroom?
- What surprised you?
- What do you want to know more about?
- What needs to change?

As the pilot semester of this initiative, your questions, ideas, and concerns will help shape future participants. Members of the ALC Committee, Classroom Support, and CETL will be present. Christopher Miller and Beth Schaefer will facilitate the session. No reservation needed. Come and meet your active learning colleagues!

NWQ ALC User’s Group
First Meeting: Friday Feb. 13
12:30 – 1:30
NWQ ALC 1921

The purpose of these informal gatherings is to exchange successful strategies, raise issues and share questions and resources with other. There will not be a formal program or workshop unless otherwise announced. Please join us!
Active Learning: High Impact or Low Impact?

Connie Schroeder, Ph.D. CETL

Extensive evidence supports the use of active learning with gains across both cognitive and affective domains. Collaborative learning, a form of active learning, was identified as one of five benchmarks assessed by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

Despite the evidence that learning in groups can promote a number of positive outcomes, instructors often raise the common concern that their students come to class unprepared, not having read the readings or completed the homework. As a result, the impact of in-class active learning may end up “low impact,” depending on who is prepared and whether or not the whole class will engage and learn. How many are active?

Oftentimes, students have learned that they don’t need to prepare for class if the material is “covered” in class. They may be able to pass a test without attending, and some instructors have tracked how much students are purchasing items on Amazon.com during class instead of engaging. In the example Grading Scheme below, the points are re distributed to match the expectations of the course and ensure that more students will have prepared for class with the readings, attend class, and demonstrate learning in class.

Worth 20% overall, one page weekly analyses, five question quizzes, or assignments before class can draw students into the content at more than a factual level. They can be turned into D2L one day in advance and awarded points for completion. The point is not to correct students, but to gauge their understanding and prepare them to move to deeper levels in class through individual or group active learning exercises and worksheets. The in-class work (25%) collected replaces attendance and is stated in the syllabus as not able to be made up. In the example below, typically higher stakes activities, projects or even exams can carry a reduced weight. This grading scheme can be modified but clearly supports active learning expectations.

What Grading Scheme makeovers have you created? Send us your examples.

Sample Course Grading Scheme

- Weekly Analysis Paper 20%
- Quizzes online (5) 25%
- Group Project [scaffolded] 20%
  - Part I
  - Part II
  - Part III
  - Part IV
- In-class learning activities 25%
  - Pre-post assessment/Low stakes assessments
  - In Class Small Group activities

on the importance of being prepared for class, showing up for class, and sustained engagement in making sense of and applying the learning. An extreme grading scheme make-over can support the expectations of an active learning course design.

For example, consider the three key aspects of an active learning class without which the activities planned can simply fail:

- Students show up
- Students are prepared having read/worked on the materials
- Students engage in class learning

Unfortunately, an instructor may use a course grading scheme that supports a traditional, high stakes oriented course design such as a lecture-based course. Heavily weighted exams and end product assignments place little emphasis on the importance of being prepared for class, showing up for class, and sustained engagement in making sense of and applying the learning. An extreme grading scheme make-over can support the expectations of an active learning course design.
Did you know?

There are **36** courses in the NWQ ALCs this spring. **If at full capacity, these 36 courses would impact 1440** students this semester in the NWQ ALCs.

A study involving 27,064 students at 309 baccalaureate-granting institutions identified two factors best predicted student academic and personal development, and satisfaction (Astin, 1993):

- Interaction among students
- Interaction between faculty and students

Over **seventy instructors** have completed the CETL two-part workshop on Active Learning and Learning in Small Groups.

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**Active**

I taught my first class in the NWQ last week. This week, I wondered how well the students would critique each other’s assignment using a rubric I provided to them along with the assignment.

They were in Design Teams I had created based on a Pre-survey due before the first day on D2L. I varied their level of experience in each group. I have used this Peer Critique process many times but students shared hard copies or I projected one assignment at a time in class.

Although it was only one class, I had hard time breaking them up from their intense use of the monitor screens to offer their recommendations and apply the rubric.

I was impressed --and they navigated the laptop provided with ease. A few glitches on my part, but overall, very encouraging!

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**IMPORTANT LINKS FOR YOU!**

- ALC Website
- NWQ Maps
- Floor Plans-NWQ

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**Other Articles and Resources**

**Group Work: What Do Students Want from Their Teammates?**

By: Maryellen Weimer, PhD


**Does Active Learning Work? A Review of the Research**

M. Prince

http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/Papers/Prince_AL.pdf

On average, students in sections characterized by active learning scored 6 percent better on examinations than did their counterparts in lecture-only classrooms, and those who were in lecture-driven sections were 1.5 times likelier to fail than were their peers in active learning classes. About a third of all students in traditional lecture classes either withdrew or got Fs or Ds, compared to about one-fifth of students in sections with active learning approaches.

The researchers say their findings held across all STEM disciplines and in class sizes and course levels of all sorts.

https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/05/13/stem-students-fare-better-when-professors-dont-just-lecture-study-finds#ixzz32zU7qK7o
Whom Do I Contact?

- Technology/Classroom Support: 229-2382 classroomhotline@uwm.edu
- Ad Hoc Event Scheduling: ROAR www.uwm.edu/roar, roar@uwm.edu
- Website: Matt Russell; Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), Golda Meir Library E 178
- Course Design: Connie Schroeder, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), connies@uwm.edu; 229-5764; Golda Meir Library E 179
- Assessment: Connie Schroeder, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), connies@uwm.edu; 229-5764; Golda Meir Library E 179

Room Set-Up

Tables should remain in their current positions. All chairs should be reset to the standard configuration at the end of each class. The standard configuration for each room is displayed in a laminated floorplan in each room.

Technology

Please log off the instructor computer and student laptops at the end of each class. If you are the last person to use the room for the day, please turn off all technology.

White Marker Board Use

Low Odor Expo Dry Erase markers are recommended for the Dry Erase Wall Boards, per the manufacturer.

Only the Expo markers provided can be used on the marker board paint on the walls. Do not use any cleaning solvent of your own. Contact Classroom Support with concerns.

Projector screen up/down controls have been added to the touch panel interface in all classrooms as of last week Friday. This will allow the screen to be raised and lowered independently of the projector power/lift allowing for writing over the projected image.

The Code for the locked instructor console cabinet is #030820. Access it through the instructor console. Please do not share with students.

The NWQ ALC effort is a truly collaborative effort that taps multiple units across campus. Five subcommittees draw on the time and expertise of volunteers who move the project along each semester.

- Technology
- Professional Development
- Communication/Promotion
- Recruiting/Scheduling
- Assessment Team
- Physical Space

We invite you to join one of these committees as all need your help and expertise! The Communication and Recruitment committees are particularly in need of members. Contact Connie Schroeder, connies@uwm.edu.
Pilot Assessment & Research Spring 2015

We appreciate your help!

Two concurrent studies have been designed to provide cross disciplinary results that will guide all future aspects of the ALC initiative. The first, *Impact of Technology, Pedagogy and Learning Spaces on Student Learning in UWM North West Quadrant Active Learning Classrooms* is conducted by the UWM NWQ ALC Assessment committee comprised of John Berges, Deb Siebert, Jonnie Dvorak, Kelly Kohlmetz, Anja Blecking, Anj Petto, and joined by new committee members in spring.

The second study, *Critical Thinking in Active Learning Classrooms: When Course Design and Space Collide* is a grant awarded by the international Professional and Organizational Development Network (POD) to Connie Schroeder of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning designed to study the impact of seven traits and five assignment factors found to provide gains in critical thinking in active learning classrooms.

Both studies involve gathering perspectives from students and instructors over the semester through pre-surveys, focus groups, interviews, class observations, and post-surveys. Results will be shared with the UWM community in order to improve the student success as well as with the POD Network Conference and the National Forum on Active Learning Classrooms in Minnesota in August.

Active Learning Tool Box

Have you struggled with group work in class? The jigsaw technique can be a useful, well-structured template for carrying out effective in-class group work. The class is divided into several teams, with each team preparing separate but related assignments. When all team members are prepared, the class is re-divided into mixed groups, with one member from each team in each group. Each person in the group teaches the rest of the group what he/she knows, and the group then tackles an assignment together that pulls all of the pieces together to form the full picture (hence the name “jigsaw”).

1. Prepare several different, related assignments for the class. In the pictorial example at right, the instructor devised four assignments, one for each of four teams. Each team then prepares one of the assignments.
2. Once each team is prepared, the class in the pictorial example is divided into four new groups. Each group will have one team member from each of the teams. Each member of the group is responsible for teaching the rest of the group what he/she has learned from his/her team assignment.
3. The group then puts all of the pieces together and completes a group task that can only be answered once all of the team pieces are together (hence the name "jigsaw").

The jigsaw technique was originally developed in the early 1970s at the University of Texas by Elliott Aronson.