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*This document was Initiated by Dr. Jennifer Baumgartner, Associate Professor at Louisiana State University, and continues to be updated with collaborative input from various groups, including [LSU CxC](#), [LSU LTC](#), [POD Network Members](#), and discerning college teachers from across the world. Active Learning while Physically Distancing by [Louisiana State University \(LSU\)](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).*

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# Teaching Tools: Active Learning while Physically Distancing

We are all looking for practical strategies to make our teaching engaging and impactful during these unusual times. The chart below outlines some common teaching goals and the face-to-face (F2F) active learning techniques often used to achieve those goals, along with corresponding approaches for online synchronous, online asynchronous, and physically-distanced settings.

**GOAL: Engage Content Learning + Support Communication Skills Development**

**Online—Synchronous**

**Online—Asynchronous**

**F2F Physically Distanced**

<b>THINK-PAIR-SHARE</b>	Use breakout meeting rooms in online video conferencing platforms to simulate small group discussions.	Pose an equivalent question to the asynchronous students, either in video or text, and ask the students to respond in a small group discussion forum. The group reports can be shared to the larger class discussion forum.	Divide the class into pairs or ask students to choose a partner. Allow time for sharing- either from a distance or using digital tools. When sharing with class, consider instruction about how to project voices so all classmates hear.
<b>SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION</b>	Use breakout meeting rooms in online video conferencing platforms to simulate small group discussions. Students may also use collaborative document tools (e.g., <a href="#">Google Docs</a> ) to record thoughts.  Give group assignments and workshop formats for small teams to hold online brainstorm meetings and create things or solve problems together using collaboration tools between live sessions.	Pose an equivalent question to the asynchronous students, either in video or text, and ask the students to respond in a small group discussion forum. The group reports can be shared to the larger class discussion forum.  Ask students to use digital pin boards, like <a href="#">Padlet</a> , to share content and have discussions.	Set up small groups of 3-5 students. Pose a question. Could also use a google doc to help with communication. Could make breakouts a little longer and send groups out of class for easier socially distanced discussion elsewhere on campus with set return time. Give students roles like recorder (maybe write group's report in <a href="#">Google Docs</a> /on handheld white board, or reporter (give oral report). Make sure to remind students to project their voices when giving an oral report so that all classmates hear.
<b>TURN &amp; TALK</b>	Use the chat feature. Ask a question and let the students reply with a brief response. Read them out loud to the whole class or cut/paste the chat into a word cloud generator to share (try <a href="#">Wordle</a> ). Could also use meeting rooms with a reporter to share.	Assign partners and pose a question, asking them to share their ideas, in a discussion forum, via email, or other tools like <a href="#">flipgrid</a> or <a href="#">marco polo</a> .	Assign partners in the classroom that can talk 6 ft apart. Alternatively, students can "talk" through texts on <a href="#">group.me</a> or through a shared google doc or slide show, when distance would make the volume in the room difficult for some students to learn.  Another option is to assign a <a href="#">Google Slidedeck</a> to groups of about 8 students. Provide instructions in the slide deck. <a href="#">Here is an example.</a>
<b>PARTIAL OUTLINES/SLIDES PROVIDED FOR LECTURE</b>	Create a set of class notes with blanks for important information and share on the LMS. Encourage students to fill in the blanks during the class session.	Create a set of class notes with blanks for important information and share on the LMS. Encourage students to fill in the blanks during the class session and while viewing course materials.	Create a set of class notes with blanks for important information and share on the LMS. Encourage students to fill in the blanks during the class session.
<b>PAUSING IN LECTURE</b>	Break up your synchronous presentation by stopping for a quick activity, such as asking students to respond to a question in chat, complete a sentence, or answer a question in a poll.	In your recorded videos, insert points for students to pause and reflect on what was just said, complete an activity such as answer questions using a quiz function (try <a href="#">Edpuzzle</a> for this).	Pause during your lecture to ask a question, give a poll, or ask students to identify the three things they have learned so far in the class.

<p><b>POSTERS &amp; GALLERY WALK</b></p>	<p>Use shared spaces for small groups to record ideas using collaborative tools such as <a href="#">Padlet</a> and Google docs/slides/draw/<a href="#">Jamboard</a>, and then view those with the whole class.</p>	<p>Use shared spaces for small groups to record ideas using collaborative tools such as Padlet and Google docs/slides/draw/<a href="#">Jamboard</a>, and ask students to review these ideas as part of the module's activities.</p>	<p>If regulations allow, put poster boards around the room. Dismiss one group of students to go a single poster board and record a response. When they finish and return to their seats, dismiss a second group. Continue until the entire class has been able to record responses. Read/ review the posters with the class or save and use to start the following class period. This activity encourages movement, individual response, and can serve as an assessment of students opinions or understanding (depending on the questions). You may need to think about options for students that are not moving around the room. One option is to consider using virtual poster boards (such as <a href="#">Padlet</a>).</p>
<p><b>FISHBOWL</b></p>	<p>Students can take turns role playing/miming a solution and others can watch and respond in chat or live discussion. Encourage students to turn off webcams so focus can be on the student miming.</p> <p>Students in fishbowl can be remote (participating in a chat, Google doc, or Zoom conversation as a small group), while other students are outside the fishbowl observing. This is a good approach to engagement- those that are "in the fishbowl" for the lesson commit to having their video/audio on. The professor leads the whole class discussion among listeners afterwards.</p> <p>You could also run a "pictionary" version online. Tools like <a href="#">Skribbl</a> allow users to join private rooms, and even to create a specific word bank (i.e., containing terms from class).</p>	<p>Students can record themselves with role play/miming a solution and others can respond in a discussion forum.</p>	<p>Students can take turns role playing or miming a solution for others to critique, watch, etc</p> <p>Students in fishbowl can be remote (participating in a chat, Google doc, or Zoom conversation as a small group), while F2F students are outside the fishbowl observing and then the professor leads the whole class discussion among listeners afterwards.</p>

**GOAL: Engage + Check Understanding**

	Online—Synchronous	Online—Asynchronous	F2F Physically Distanced
<b>POLLING</b>	Use the <a href="#">polling feature in Zoom</a> or another online poll to ask questions and show responses in real-time.	Use the polling feature in your LMS and share out the results in a class announcement, email, or within the LMS.	Use an online polling feature and share results with the class. Students without a device can use colored cards, <a href="#">Plickers</a> , hands, or vertical movement to indicate their choice.

## GOAL: Monitor/Assess Understanding

	Online—Synchronous	Online—Asynchronous	F2F Physically Distanced
<b>QUICKWRITE</b>	Pose a question or two in a discussion forum and have students respond. Instructors may ask for some students to share a selection of responses or summary of their responses with the whole class.	Pose a question or two in a discussion forum and have students respond. Instructors may follow up by sharing a selection of responses or summary of their responses with the whole class.	Pose 1-2 questions and have students write a response. Students can turn these in at the end of class. Instructors may ask some students to share a selection of responses or summary of their responses with the class.
<b>MUDDIEST POINT</b>	Encourage students to identify any unclear or “muddy points”. Muddiest points can be added in Zoom chat or on a shared screen.	Pose a question in a discussion forum or other shared space or submit a video chat (one tool that could work is <a href="#">Flipgrid</a> ).	Have students use post-it notes to share their muddiest point and the instructor can discuss with the class.

## GOAL: Reflect on Learning

	Online—Synchronous	Online—Asynchronous	F2F Physically Distanced
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<b>FOUR CORNERS</b>	Students have 4 colored cards that can be held up to the webcam when asked a question to display their answer. A Zoom poll could also be used.	Have students make a choice using the poll feature in your LMS.	Students have 4 colored cards (or raise hands or stand up/vertical movement to indicate agreement). These are held up when asked a question to display their answer. Could also do this online in a collaborative document. Can use online polling technology.
<b>WHAT'S MISSING?</b>	On Zoom use slides, present a list of ideas, terms, equation or rationale. Students can respond with what is missing using chat, poll or live discussion.	Using slides, present a list of ideas, terms, equation or rationale. Students must respond in the discussion forum with what is missing. Can also be done using a lesson or quiz.	Using slides, present a list of ideas, terms, equation or rationale. Students respond with what is missing using a collaborative document or poll. Can also be done individually in notes and then discussed in share-outs.
<b>AHA WALL</b>	In real time ask students to post an “aha” in the chat and use these to guide discussion or future instruction.	Ask students to post an “aha” in the discussion forum and use these to guide discussion or future instruction.	Consider placing poster boards on the wall and asking students to put their ideas up using post-it notes, using social distancing directions. Or each student has a personal, handheld dry-erase board.

## GOAL: Strengthen Understanding

**Online—Synchronous**

**Online—Asynchronous**

**F2F Physically Distanced**

<b>PRO/CON LIST</b>	Together create a pro/con list using a collaborative google document in real time or on a shared screen	Together create a pro/con list using a collaborative google document	Generate a pro/con list using collaborative documents, such as Google docs.
<b>CONCEPT MAP</b> *visual communication	Use an online tool (such as <a href="#">Mindmeister</a> or <a href="#">Google Draw</a> ) to have students work collaboratively in real-time to add to the concept map.	Use an online tool (such as <a href="#">Mindmeister</a> or <a href="#">Coggle</a> ), to have students work collaboratively to add to the concept map over the course of a module. Google Draw may be a tool that would be useful.	Use an online tool (such as <a href="#">Mindmeister</a> ), to have students work collaboratively in real-time to add to the concept map.
<b>VISUAL PROMPT</b> *visual communication	Offer a visual prompt and ask students to respond. This can be done using tools like Voicethread, A.nnotate, or Flipgrid. Students can record a short video responding to a teacher video.	Offer a visual prompt and ask students to respond. This can be done using tools like Voicethread and A.nnotate	Offer a visual prompt and ask students to respond using live poll technology (such as <a href="#">Polleverywhere</a> or <a href="#">Slide</a> ).
<b>ENTRY/EXIT TICKET</b>	At the beginning or end of a class/ module, ask students to respond to a question in the chat or discussion forum or use a polling program to ask questions.	At the beginning or end of a class/ module, ask students to respond to a question in the chat, poll or discussion forum.	At the beginning or end of a class/ module, ask students to respond to a question using paper or virtual response and turn in to the instructor. Alternatively, you could use e-polling tools.

## GOAL: Active Engagement + Planning for Future Learning Connections

**Online—Synchronous**

**Online—Asynchronous**

**F2F Physically Distanced**

<b>BRAINSTORMING CHALLENGE</b>	Use the chat feature or collaborative writing spaces such as Google docs to brainstorm ideas and review in class.	Use collaborative writing spaces in your LMS such as <a href="#">Moodle Workshop</a> to brainstorm ideas and review in follow-up video/post or activity.	Use collaborative writing spaces to brainstorm and share in real-time. This can be done with some features in your LMS (i.e., chat, polling), online polling, or Google documents.
<b>COLLABORATIVE SUMMARIES</b>  *written communication	Students individually compose a summary of a topic, then share those with their group members in real time via breakout groups. Then groups can collaborate to compose a best-of summary to share with the class. Instructor can lead the whole class discussion, asking questions like 'why summary is the best? Why? What was missed? etc.	Students individually compose a summary of a topic, then share those with their group members asynchronously via online, group-separated discussions using the "post-first" feature available in some LMSs. Set up discussion groups where students can collaborate to compose a best-of summary to share with the class for feedback in a discussion forum. The whole class can vote on the best summary and a discussion forum about thePrompts for the discussion can include a 'why summary is the best? Why? What was missed? etc.	Students individually compose a summary of a topic, then share those with their group members in real time via breakout groups. Then groups can collaborate to compose a best-of summary to share with the class. Instructor can lead the whole class discussion, asking questions like 'why summary is the best? Why? What was missed? etc.
<b>1-MINUTE QUIZ</b>	Students complete a 3 question quiz worth 3 points in the first 5 minutes of class. Questions for the quiz are given in the last 5 minutes of the previous class. Answers can be eMailed or posted on an adaptive release discussion board post.	Offer a short, alternate activity that allows students to earn the same number of points.	Students complete a 3 question quiz worth 3 points in the first 5 minutes of class. Questions for the quiz are given in the last 5 minutes of the previous class. Answers can be eMailed or posted on an adaptive release discussion board post.

## GOAL: Providing/Getting Feedback on Work in Progress

**Online—Synchronous**

**Online—Asynchronous**

**F2F Physically Distanced**

<p><b>PEER REVIEW</b></p> <p>*written, visual, or oral communication</p>	<p>Have students share drafts of papers, visuals, or oral presentations prior to class and then break into groups for discussion/feedback.</p> <p>Have select students share with the class in real time and provide a way for students to give feedback (e.g., answer 3 questions)</p>	<p>Students post drafts in LMS, or read it aloud via <a href="#">Flipgrid</a>. Guided by course rubric/specific prompts for feedback, partner(s) read/view and respond. Consider small-group peer review (see <a href="#">Small Group Discussion</a> technique). Writers also score reviewers on helpfulness of feedback.</p>	<p>See <a href="#">Think-Pair-Share</a> technique.</p>
<p><b>PROGRESS CHART FOR WHOLE CLASS</b></p>	<p>Use a collaborative document like this "<a href="#">project progress chart</a>" to communicate progress with each student. Students not only benefit from getting feedback on their own work, but can see others approaches, feedback and have a sense of progress.</p>	<p>Chart steps in larger projects (essay writing, research project, etc) in Google doc, and each student fills out a row as progresses. Prof gives feedback via marginal comments.</p>	<p>In a F2F physically distant classroom can still use tools like the "<a href="#">project progress chart</a>" to communicate progress with each student.</p>

## Additional Resources, Readings, and References

- [Active Learning for Online Teaching](#)
- [Getting Started with Active Learning Guide](#)
- [Can Active Learning Co-Exist with Physically Distanced Classrooms?](#)
- [Three Strategies for Teaching Writing Remotely During the Pandemic](#)
- [Delivering Remote Education in Place of Seated Education: What & How](#)