

Active Learning in the Library

Students and library users learn best when they are engaged in the learning process. Here are some strategies and tips for engagement:

Strategy	Description	Your Notes
Cephalonian Method	Engages students by placing frequently asked questions in their hands. Once you provide students with one question to ask, they are more likely to think of and ask their own questions.	
The Art of Questioning	Research shows that effective teachers ask more questions during instruction and that the frequency of questions is positively related to student achievement. What questions do you ask your students? How can you ask more effective questions?	
Hands-on Practice	When possible, students should have a chance to immediately practice the information literacy skills and concepts they learn in your instruction session. This reinforces their learning.	
Student-led Demonstrations	Social constructivism tells us that students retain what they learn when they construct meaning in groups. Asking students to explore a resource and then present it to the class allows them to do just that.	
Concept Mapping	An important skill for students to learn is to turn a research topic into useful search terms. Concept mapping can help them engage in that process. Ask: what are key issues and question on this topic? who might care about it? what topics are connected?	

For more information on these strategies:

Dubaj, M. The art of questioning in instruction. *LOEX*, Oak Brook, IL. May 1-3, 2008. (Conference proceedings from LOEX 2008 should be published in 2010).

Morgan, N., & Davies, L. (2004). Innovative library induction - introducing the 'Cephalonian Method'. *SCONUL Focus*, (32), 4-8.

Powell, K., & Kalina, C. (2009). Cognitive and Social Constructivism: Developing Tools for an Effective Classroom. *Education*, 130(2), 241-250.

Your Turn!

1. What active learning strategies do you currently use in your practice of information literacy instruction?
2. Which of your instruction sessions could you revise to include more active learning?
3. Which strategies will you try using? How do you envision the activities playing out in the classroom?
4. How will you assess the effectiveness of your active learning strategies?
5. What questions do you have for the presenters?

Your presenters:

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