Learning and Teaching Approaches

Active Learning

Active learning is a process that has student learning at its centre. Active learning focuses on *how* students learn, not just on *what* they learn. Students are encouraged to 'think hard' and explore new learning, rather than passively receive information from the teacher. Active learning is, therefore, based on the premise that learning is an active process that focusses on developing '*deeper learning, longer retention*' for learners. It is important to note that active learning is not about pupils being physically active (this can still be a bonus), but more about encouraging learners to engage and explore their learning with active brains.

Research shows us that it is not possible to transmit understanding to students by simply telling them what they need to know. Instead, teachers need to make sure that they challenge their students' thinking. With active learning, students play an important part in their own learning process. They build knowledge and understanding in response to opportunities provided by their teacher.

Good Practice at Lockerbie Primary

Instead of hands up –

- Think, pair share
- Hands up after the above increases the participators
- White boards
- Think, pair share, group share. Decide on a group response. Develop with one member of the four to write their response on the white board
- Group share – teacher can ask for wrong or right answers afterwards if they wish
- Voting
- Stand up rather than hands up (to oxygenate and actively participate)
- Traffic lights
- Plickers

Instead of reading from a PPT –

- Jigsaw – Pupils in groups of 4 and each given 1 or 2 pages from the PPT and each group has to teach their information to the rest of the group.
- Pupils read the information and come up with the questions for the class to answer.
- Before showing the PPT give pupils some research time on the topic (class or homework) create or add to the PPT together as a class with pupil suggestions/ideas.

Active Learning activities –

- Discussions ('find someone who…', 'inside, outside circle…', 'pick a name from the hat', etc.)

- Collaborative learning groups
- Student debates
- Research projects
- Pupil presentations
- Creating posters/leaflets/newsletter
- Concept mapping
- Role play
- Games (including pupils making their own)
- Worksheets
- Problem-based activities

Early years –
- Sensory bags/actions etc. when reading a story

Other suggestions
- Giving pupils a choice in how to display their learning
- Giving pupils a choice in how they document/present their knowledge to their peers/staff/home
- Effective questioning – HOTS
- Growth Mindset exploration of learning
- Constructing own learning intention and success criteria
- Pupils taking leadership over sharing and explaining learning to peers (similar and/or mixed ability groupings)

Suggested Websites and resources
http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stages_1_and_2/altm-ks12.pdf - Lots of ideas that can be adapted for first and second level.
https://www.education.gov.scot/Documents/btc2.pdf - Active learning in the early years.

Differentiation
Good Practice and Expectations for Lockerbie Primary
Give children sufficient time to make good progress
- Use HOTS
- Use Say, Write, Make, Do methods
- Interdisciplinary learning
- Active learning (pupils choosing activities to meet learning styles)

Know the children in front of you and cater to their learning needs
- peer learning, opportunities to work independently and collaboratively
- Class brainstorm before starting topics (find out prior learning and further interests)
- Allow learners to lead learning , e.g. Talking floor books/Big books
- Reading and using pupil prior information (awareness of significant changes or development
- needs)

- Accommodate childrens' learning styles (selection of activities for children to choose from)

Resources – should be designed towards the learners in front of you
- children having the opportunity to work at stations, teacher to observe and engage
- with learners throughout
- effective use of space and resources, e.g. outdoors, Academy, staff expertise
- Active learning (pupils choosing activities to meet their learning styles)

Planning for progression – those who need support and those who need challenged
- Children included in planning and shaping learning; engage in learning conversations to
- come up with targets for themselves and self-assess
- Daily use of AIFL, particularly self and peer assessment, and training children to be confident
- in this
- Effective tracking by Class Teacher

Use professional judgement to allow different context coverage
- Regular feedback from pupils
- Class teacher planning time for pupil observations

Relate learning to individual life experiences
- active learning, e.g. money, building structures
- be aware of current and topical issues, and local news and events

Provide opportunities to engage in stimulating and relevant contexts
- Class brainstorm at start of topic
- Regular feedback and reflection by all (to inform future learning)
- Use of Talking floor book/Big book

Staff to use skilled interactions with each child
- HOTS/ Blooms Taxonomy,
- peer observations
- Allowing pupils "thinking time"
- Class teacher plan observations, and question pupils when appropriate
- Class teacher and pupils model self and peer assessment
- Planning for support staff to target different children at a range of levels

Outdoor Learning

Aims
- Have a more co-ordinated approach to outdoor play and increase the opportunities available to be physically active.
- Inspire children to take responsibility for their learning in an outdoor context.
- Encourage children to develop the skills to solve problems, developing resilient and reflective learners.

- Develop skills of communication, cooperation and collaborative learning.
- Encourage children to care for their environment.
- Ensure quality of access and participation for all.

Benefits

- Outdoor learning helps to ensure that children are successful learners enabling them to develop knowledge and skills that add value to their everyday learning experiences.
- Outdoor learning enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon young children's attitudes beliefs and self-perceptions.
- Outdoor learning contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem and self-sufficiency. Outdoor learning contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle.
- Outdoor learning has a positive impact upon children's personal and social development.
- It can allow children to develop as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their wider community.
- It can create pride in the school and wider community and promote community involvement, renewing children's pride and creating a sense of belonging and responsibility.
- It raises learners' attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills and team work.
- Encourages the holistic development of children.
- Helps to develop a love, appreciation and respect for nature and for all that is living.

Collaborative Learning
What is it?
Collaborative learning is the educational approach of using groups to enhance **learning** through working together. Groups of two or more **learners** work together to solve problems, complete tasks, or learn new concepts.

Why use collaborative learning?
Research shows that educational experiences that are active, social, contextual, engaging, and student-owned lead to deeper learning. The benefits of collaborative learning include:

- Development of higher-level thinking, oral communication, self-management, and leadership skills.
- Promotion of student-faculty interaction.
- Increase in student retention, self-esteem, and responsibility.
- Exposure to and an increase in understanding of diverse perspectives.
- Preparation for real life social and employment situations.

What is looks like in Lockerbie Primary School
6 Major Types of Collaborative Learning (there are more)

1. Think-pair-share
Think-pair-share is one of the most common types of collaborating learning. It is a low-effort, low-stakes strategy for abbreviated collaboration and active learning. In this kind of learning, learners are required to work independently, share their ideas with others, consider peer responses, and ultimately engage in discussions in a manner that starts to synthesize an exchange. The above requires that learners act rather than listening passively, and this explains why teachers would often call an individual at random to share their ideas.

2. Informal collaborative learning groups
Another type of collaborative learning that is based on how learners are organized in a learning environment is the informal learning groups. As the name suggests, this is the case where a class is broken down into small fragments and assigned a group project to handle. This type of approach leads to spending less time for lecture and fundamentally improves the amount of material retained by students.

3. Formal collaborative learning groups
Again, this type of learning is based on how learners organize themselves in a learning environment, and it forms the greatest routine practices of collaborative learning. With formal learning groups, learners are assembled into specific groups, and they are required to stay together for many weeks or months working on an extensive project(s). By and large, this type of collaborative learning is where students study and apply comfortably the various approaches of working together.

4. problem-based learning
Also known as PBL, Problem-based learning is another type of collaborative learning where a particular problem is introduced for learners to solve, often in groups, over a given period. It is required that students ultimately understand the problem at hand before proposing a solution or response. PBL starts to approximate the kind of work students do as well as the way they need to approach the problem in their daily lives.

5. Collaborative base groups
Collaborative base organizations are stable, long-term groups that have been formed to last for at least a year. The teams are made up of learners with distinct attitudes and perspectives. The above type of collaborative learning provides a platform where students support each other in matters related to academics and other spheres of life. Each member is required to finish the assigned task and contribute ideas towards a given project. In most cases,

students meet periodically to check on their academic progress as well as to develop healthy cognitive and social habits.

6. Jigsaw collaborative learning

As the name suggests, the above learning type makes use of jigsaw strategies to break down learning problem into small parts to be handled by several groups within a given learning environment. Each group is expected to report back beside contributing ideas in a bid to finding solutions to the problem at hand. The learning type is suitable when dealing with a large project(s).

Conclusion

While collaborative learning is not common and prevalent in many institutions, it helps to satisfy many goals when planned carefully. It helps learners to become constructively and actively involved in coursework topics, to feel responsible for the studying, and to improve the spirit of teamwork among the participants. The program supports several learning styles by typically adopting a heterogeneous strategy where some learners write, others discuss, some edit, listen, and even synthesize and so on. In a nutshell, the various types of collaborative learning explained above reminds learners that learning requires more than just listening, but it entails other aspects of the collaborative environment.

https://www.eztalks.com/elearning/6-major-types-of-collaborative-learning.html

Considerations for using collaborative learning

- Introduce group or peer work early in the semester to set clear student expectations.
- Establish ground rules for participation and contributions.
- Plan for each stage of group work.
- Carefully explain to your students how groups or peer discussion will operate and how students will be graded.
- Help students develop the skills they need to succeed, such as using team-building exercises or introducing self-reflection techniques.
- Consider using written contracts.
- Incorporate self-assessment and peer assessment for group members to evaluate their own and others' contributions.

Getting started with Collaborative learning

Shorter in-class collaborative learning activities generally involve a three-step process. This process can be as short as five minutes, but can be longer, depending on the task at hand.

- Introduce the task. This can be as simple as instructing students to turn to their neighbour to discuss or debate a topic.
- Provide students with enough time to engage with the task. Walk around and address any questions as needed.
- Debrief. Call on a few students to share a summary of their conclusions. Address any misconceptions or clarify any confusing points. Open the floor for questions.

For larger group work projects, here are some strategies to help ensure productive group dynamics:

- Provide opportunities for students to develop rapport and group cohesion through icebreakers, team-building, and reflection exercises.
- Give students time to create a group work plan allowing them to plan for deadlines and divide up their responsibilities.
- Have students establish ground rules. Students can create a contract for each member to sign. This contract can include agreed-upon penalties for those who fail to fulfil obligations.
- Assign roles to members of each group and change the roles periodically. For example, one student can be the coordinator, another the note-taker, another the summarizer, and another the planner of next steps.
- Allow students to rate each other's quality and quantity of contributions. Use these evaluations when giving individual grades, but do not let it weigh heavily on a student's final grade. Communicate clearly how peer assessment will influence grades.
- Check in with groups intermittently but encourage students to handle their own issues before coming to you for assistance.

https://teaching.cornell.edu/teaching-resources/engaging-students/collaborative-learning

Extra reading

https://www.edutopia.org/blog/deeper-learning-collaboration-key-rebecca-alber
https://learningpowerkids.com/collaborative-learning/
https://learningpowerkids.com/constructing-collaborative-classrooms/