

# How do I design learning activities?

## Topic focus

- learning design theory
- preparing learning activities which engage students

## Topic outcomes

- you will be able to design learning activities based on good design theory

*'Each tutorial seems to be much the same. Students appear to lose interest after a few weeks, and don't want to become involved in classroom learning. We have to cover the theory before the exam. I set all these questions to help students learn and very few of them are able to answer them.'*

### Take a moment to reflect on this issue.

What challenges does this pose for *your* teaching? .....

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## Possible solutions

1. Aim to develop learning activities which seem realistic and authentic to your students.
2. Using case studies to illustrate and apply theory works well with many students.
3. An element of uncertainty and challenge and problem solving (where there is not necessarily one answer) can assist students' learning.
4. Role play, debate, discussion in the round, jigsaw discussions, creating overhead transparencies, think-pair-share all bring variety to tutorial activities, and cater more for different learning styles.

## More help

Here are some resources from which you may seek some advice. They are all annotated so as to assist you in making judgements about what might be useful advice for your particular teaching context. By exploring some or all of these resources, you may well be able to generate strategies to suit your particular circumstances.

1. <http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/Teaching/flexible/learning.html#activities> - describes commonly used learning activities, discusses the linking of activities to learning objectives, and suggests activities which challenge student thinking.
2. <http://facultyfiles.deanza.edu/gems/alvesdelimadiana/tuttech.doc> - lists some simple but effective techniques for involving students in learning in the classroom.
3. <http://www.ou.edu/pii/tips/ideas/model.html> - a useful model to use when designing tasks for active learning.
4. <http://www.umuc.edu/virtualteaching/topic1/systems.html> - a well organised step by step guide to designing learning activities for online learning.
5. <http://elrond.scam.ecu.edu.au/oliver/2002/edmedia1.pdf> - an article by Ron Oliver and Jan Herrington (Edith Cowan University) discussing online learning design for inexperienced teachers.

6. [http://learning.cqu.edu.au/lt\\_resources/learning\\_design.htm](http://learning.cqu.edu.au/lt_resources/learning_design.htm) - this site from Central Queensland University provides a well written overview of the stages of good learning design, both in an online and face to face environment.
7. <http://www.learningdesigns.uow.edu.au/index.html> - an excellent site from the University of Wollongong, providing advice on learning design principles coupled with exemplars of good practice.
8. [http://tlu.ecom.unimelb.edu.au/tutortraining/engagement\\_small.html](http://tlu.ecom.unimelb.edu.au/tutortraining/engagement_small.html) - includes some suggestions for activities which you can use in tutorials.
9. [http://www.utas.edu.au/casestudies/cases/wordcases/small\\_group\\_tutorials.html](http://www.utas.edu.au/casestudies/cases/wordcases/small_group_tutorials.html) - describes a case study of one teacher's approach to a tutorial activity in Agricultural Science, University of Tasmania.

## **Alert !**

Classroom activities which:

- vary in style and approach,
- are of relevance directly to the topics being studied, and
- include student perceptions of /experiences with the world seem to work best.

## **Related topics**

*How do I write learning objectives?*