Study Guides and Strategies

To be intelligent is to be open-minded, active, memoried,and persistently experimental.
Leopold Stein, 1810 – 82, German rabbi

Learning to learn series

Accessed from: **http://www.studygs.net/activelearn.htm**

Active Learning

What is active learning?

Active learning is experiential, mindful, and engaging.
Through it you can explore a set of learning experiences that can be more effective and interesting, and you can take more responsibility for your education. This is especially critical in an online environment where you may not even meet your teacher or fellow students.

Begin by defining content (what to study) and establishing your objectives (what to learn). Next read! Do your research. Then build a foundation of activities that can help you learn, and communicate what you have learned. Some may not be interesting to you; some a nice fit with your preferred learning style(s).

You can engage in these first activities as an individual:

Active listening:

Active listening intentionally focuses on who you are listening to, whether in a lecture, in a conversation, or a group, in order to understand what is said. As the listener, you should then be able to "replay" or repeat back in your own words what they have said to their satisfaction. This does not mean you agree with, but rather understand, what they are saying. See our guide on active listening.

Looking/seeing

Look at images, such as pictures and graphs and maps (for example, the *Cone of Learning* below). Try to understand the use and importance of each image: enter key

words that come to mind. Verbal cues, such as titles and authors, and visual cues such as line, color, visual organization, etc. will help you interpret information and understand its story without the words. Often the context of the image is vital to understanding it, as illustrations in a text book, examples in a catalogue, graphs in a financial statement. So also a painting can be better understood by its time, art movement, etc.

Seeing and hearing:

In addition to PowerPoint lectures, multimedia and movies have the advantage of illustrating reading and lecture content in new (engaging) formats.
Demonstrations and field trips build on classroom experiences and can provide you as an individual with a shared learning experience on a topic
They also enable you as learner to witness how concepts are practiced or exemplified in real life processes or situations
Remember: you don't need a classroom trip to visit locations that will help you understand your studies! Brainstorm organizations, factories, etc. and send an email or phone to set up a visit. Don't just go and expect professionals to stop their work.
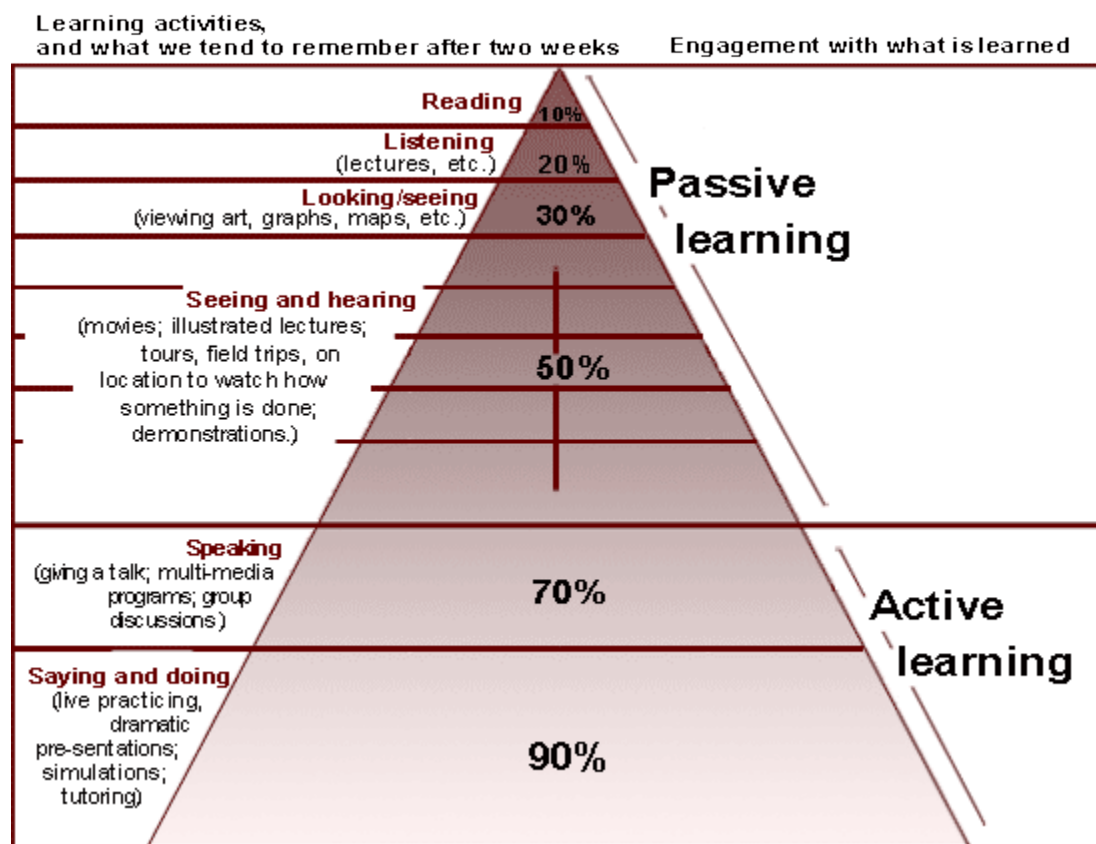
Cone of Learning adapted from Edgar Dale (1946)

As we progress into "active" learning , a group can make the task more effective.
Within the group, you share responsibility to participate and collaborate, take advantage

of each participant's strengths, and rely on each other for good project management and effective learning.

Classroom, online and public presentations:

Develop, produce, practice and deliver speeches and presentations;
multi-media and interactive programs; newsletters, Websites and blogs, etc.

Stages to develop these include:

- Defining objectives
- Developing your "voice" and point of view
- Identifying and writing for an audience
- Mapping out program content
- Identifying presentation tools/resources and communication technologies
- Scripting/developing the piece; practicing and presenting it
- Documenting your message
- Evaluating how you could have done better.

As an exercise, this is not static but rather a dynamic learning process.
Build on, apply and reinforce what you have learned, not only what its content it, but also the process in developing it.
In the process of translating content into message, you refine what you think you know, and uncover more that you will need to understand since communicating relies on developing your message for a specific audience.
If in a collaborative project, you have the advantage of sharing perspectives as well as skills;
each should be open to personalized feedback that includes questioning, listening and evaluating answers.

Saying and doing:

The more you work with the content of what is learned,
the more confidently you will recall it.

Examples include interviewing and developing oral histories;
role playing, performing, debating through opposing points of view;
case studies and problem-based learning, gaming and simulations;
research projects and symposiums; developing models;
student teaching including developing evaluation instruments (test questions);
leading discussions and review sessions. There is no better way to learn a language than to live in its environment.

Where's writing?

Writing is communicating/expressing what you learned, a method of evaluating what you know, as well as an active learning exercise

In pairs or a group, online or in person, you can read and react to what other learners post/write, and respond to and provide feedback in a collaborative environment, even collaborate on the development of an exercise.

Understand writing as a process
rather than a simple exercise of drafting and editing.
The goal is to refine its *message* value for an audience, and for that you need an audience!

- Learn how to exchange feedback on an assignment.
  Learn to listen to comments about content as if peers
  are the audience of the piece:
  How they understand it, or expect to understand it:
  What are the strengths and weaknesses, point of view, etc.
  What is the role of grammar and vocabulary you are using?
- Collaborating on the writing of an assignment, either in groups or online,
  can be practice for employment situations!

Guides referenced in *Active Learning*:

Reading critically* | *Active listening* |*Visual learner* | *Learning with multiple sources* | *Online learning* | *Presenting projects/speeches* | *Tutoring guidelines* | *Using feedback* | *Collaborative/cooperative learning* | *Seven stages of writing assignments

See also:

Learning to learn | **Succeeding in continuing education** | **Visual/spatial learning** | **Learning as a student-athlete** | **Learning as an adult** | **Learning with ADHD** | **Active learning** | **Action learning** | **Language learning strategies** **Exploring your personal learning style** | **Learning folder**