Good Teaching: Students are actively engaged in learning

Active & Engaged Learning (AEL) happens when teaching engages students in the learning process. In AEL, students do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing (Prince, 2004). AEL is in contrast to students sitting in a lecture or at a computer, passively receiving information. Yet, students can be actively engaged in learning while sitting in a lecture or at a computer! Equally, students may appear to be active but may not be actively engaged in learning.

Students learn more easily when they are actively engaged in the learning process!
AEL improves retention of ideas, motivating students to do further study, and developing thinking skills compared to usual methods.

What does Active and Engaged Learning look like?
So, what does it look like when students are actively engaged in learning?

Active and engaged learning is generally happening, when students are:
  • answering questions on the topic;
  • responding to questions and ideas on the topic;
  • asking questions on the topic;
  • suggesting, explaining, describing, acknowledging, confirming, concurring;
  • interacting, collaborating;
  • discussing the topic with peers;
  • presenting;
  • trying out ideas; applying;
  • relating ideas, knowledge, examples, the topic or experiences to another situation;
  • making decisions, initiating;
  • investigating problems, solving problems;
  • self-monitoring, self-correcting, self-evaluating;
  • estimating, approximating;
  • calculating; analyzing, comparing, contrasting;
  • writing (that is not just copying);
  • summarising, actively reading;
  • drawing e.g. drawing a concept map, a diagram, a graph, a model;
  • engaged in production of knowledge; knowledge creation;
  • setting goals;
  • writing or discussing the aim, hypothesis or purpose;
  • writing or discussing the method or procedure;
  • listing equipment needed for an investigation, experiment or study;
  • assessing risk and safety;
  • managing risk and safety;
  • doing an investigation, experiment or study;
  • drawing a data table ready for the data;
  • drawing a graph of the results;
  • discussing the results from an investigation, experiment or study;
  • drawing conclusions;
  • writing or discussing the implications of an investigation, experiment or study; and
  • making recommendations, judgments;

Reference