

Prompts for an Endless Amount of Active Learning Strategies

In the development of this work, initial ideas and drafts were provided by OpenAI's ChatGPT, which were extensively modified and expanded upon by Jared Campbell. He can be reached at jared@fit.edu for any questions.

When crafting prompts for generating active learning strategies using AI tools like ChatGPT, it's essential to provide clear, concise, and specific guidance to ensure the prompts are effective and yield useful results. Here are key tips and considerations to include in the prompt crafting guidance for educators:

1. Define Clear Objectives

- **Specify the Goal:** Clearly state what you aim to achieve with the active learning activity. Whether it's to enhance understanding, encourage application, or stimulate discussion, your objective should guide the prompt.

2. Incorporate Course Specifics

- **Course Details:** Include relevant details about the course, such as the subject matter, level (introductory, intermediate, advanced), and any specific topics or concepts you're focusing on.
- **Class Dynamics:** Mention class size, format (online, in-person, hybrid), and any unique characteristics of the student group.

3. Focus on Active Learning Principles

- **Engagement Over Reception:** Craft prompts that emphasize student engagement, critical thinking, and application over passive reception of information.
- **Collaboration and Interaction:** If aiming for collaborative strategies, highlight the need for interaction among students in your prompt.

4. Be Specific and Detailed

- **Detailed Requests:** The more specific your prompt, the more tailored and applicable the AI's response will be. Include details about the learning environment, any constraints (time, resources), and desired outcomes.
- **Examples and Context:** Providing examples or context can help the AI generate more relevant and creative suggestions.

5. Encourage Creativity and Flexibility

- **Open-Ended Questions:** Use open-ended questions to encourage a wide range of creative responses.
- **Flexibility in Responses:** Be open to adapting the AI-generated ideas to fit your specific teaching context.

6. Include Assessment Considerations

- **Feedback and Assessment:** If assessment of the active learning activity is necessary, mention this in your prompt. Ask for suggestions on how students' understanding, or skills could be evaluated effectively.

7. Iteration and Refinement

- **Iterative Process:** Understand that crafting effective prompts may require iteration. Use the feedback from initial AI responses to refine your prompts.
- **Experimentation:** Encourage experimentation with different phrasings and details to see how slight changes can yield different suggestions.

8. Ethical and Practical Considerations

- **Ethical Use:** Remind users to consider the ethical implications of the suggested activities, ensuring they promote inclusivity, accessibility, and respect for all students.

- **Practicality:** Ensure the activities suggested by AI are feasible within your teaching context, considering time, resources, and the physical or virtual learning environment.

Prompt Template:

"I am teaching a [course name/subject] class at the [level (e.g., introductory, intermediate, advanced)] level, with [number of students] students. The class format is [in-person/online/hybrid]. I'm looking for an active learning activity that focuses on [specific topic or skill], aiming to [objective/goal of the activity, e.g., enhance critical thinking, apply theoretical knowledge, encourage collaboration].

The activity should last approximately [duration] minutes and must be suitable for a [describe learning environment, e.g., large lecture hall, small classroom, virtual platform]. I prefer activities that [any preferences, e.g., require minimal resources, involve technology, are easily adaptable].

Additionally, I need a method to assess the effectiveness of the activity, such as [type of assessment, e.g., formative feedback, a quiz, peer evaluation]. Constraints to consider include [any constraints, e.g., limited access to technology, varying levels of student preparedness, physical space limitations].

Could you suggest an active learning strategy that fits these criteria?"

Example Filled Template:

"I am teaching a **World History** class at the **introductory** level, with **25** students. The class format is **hybrid**. I'm looking for an active learning activity that focuses on **the impacts of industrialization**, aiming to **encourage collaboration and critical analysis of historical events**.

The activity should last approximately **30** minutes and must be suitable for a **classroom that can be rearranged for group work and discussions**. I prefer activities that **encourage peer-to-peer learning and use primary source documents**.

Additionally, I need a method to assess the effectiveness of the activity, such as **a short reflective writing assignment**. Constraints to consider include **students' varying familiarity with the topic and limited access to physical archives, relying instead on digital resources**.

Could you suggest an active learning strategy that fits these criteria?"

If you do not find an activity that you feel will work well in your course – Iterate!

Ask it to provide multiple active learning activities, if needed.