10 Active Learning Techniques for a Flipped Classroom

In a flipped classroom model students engage in the more passive learning experiences outside of the classroom reading, watching or listening to video lectures, interviews, etc. – so that more participatory and active learning can take place face-to-face, inside the classroom. What does this “active learning” look like? What are some teaching methods and facilitation techniques that encourage students to delve deeper into the content and learn through discussion, inquiry, and engagement with one another? Below are few techniques to try out in your classroom...

1. Human Spectrum/Likert Scale/Four Corners
Students are asked to respond to a statement by moving to a particular end/ corner of the classroom or by placing themselves along a spectrum. For example, a professor teaching a class on educational technology might put forward the statement, “smart phones should not be used in the classroom,” and then students move to one side of the room if they agree with the statement and to the other side of the room if they disagree with the statement. Students are then asked to explain why they are standing where they are standing. This is a kinesthetic exercise that invites all students to think about a proposition and respond to it, without forcing everyone to share verbally.

2. Human Bingo
Each student is given a bingo card where each square contains a question or statement. The students must mingle and chat with their classmates to find a peer who knows (or thinks they know) the answer to a question or agrees with one of the statements. Students are given a set amount of time to converse with their classmates and achieve “bingo” as many times as they can within the time frame. Students are encouraged to rely on one student for no more than two squares. After the time is up, the professor or students decide which questions or statements they want to discuss further.

3. Fishbowl Debate
Students are broken up into 3-4 small groups. Each group is asked to take a position on a particular theme or topic covered in the readings and videos. One chair per group is placed in the middle of the room. One student from each group sits in one of the chairs. The students in the chairs engage in debate and discussion around the overarching issue/problem/question, while all other students observe from the outside (like people looking into a fishbowl). Students from each group are then asked to tap their representative on the shoulder to replace them in the fishbowl and continue to debate. Each student is asked to enter to the fishbowl, but no student can re-enter the fishbowl until every student in his or her group has been in it at least once.

4. Jeopardy
The professor prepares a jeopardy board with each category corresponding with a particular theme or topic covered in the reading and video assignments. Students are broken up into equal sized teams and,
following the rules of the game show, “Jeopardy,” the class goes through the jeopardy board. Additions to this can involve short discussions on each answer about its relevance to the course and/or students' reactions to the material.

5. **Cocktail Party / Jig Saw**
   Students are broken up into small groups to discuss a question or work on a problem. After a certain period of time the students are mixed up to form new groups and asked to discuss a new question or work on a new problem. This ensures that students are given the opportunity to work with all of their classmates and not limit themselves to the same small groups every class.

6. **Hassle Line**
   Students are lined up in two lines facing each other. The professor puts forward a particular question or problem and students are given a set amount of time to discuss or solve the problem with their partner. Once the first question/problem is discussed, one line then shifts down one person and the person at the end of that line goes to the other end. Variations of this can involve a large group de-brief where students are asked to reflect on what their partner shared with them.

7. **Inside/Outside Circle**
   This is similar to the hassle line, but using circle formations instead of lines. Students are arranged into two concentric circles, both with an equal amount of people. The smaller circle on the inside has students facing out and the larger circle on the outside has the students facing in. Every student should then be partnered up with one of their peers. One variation in this exercise is to only allow one person to speak while the other only listens. Then have the students switch roles.

8. **Oxford Style Debate**
   With this style debate two sides are asked to respond to a proposition. For example, a proposition might be, “Aid to Africa is doing more harm than good.” One side argues in the affirmative (agreeing with the proposition) and the other side argues in the negative (disagreeing with the proposition). Each side is given an equal amount of time to give opening statements, followed by rebuttals, and then concluding statements. The audience is then invited to ask questions to either side of the debate. Some useful techniques one can use to keep the audience engaged while other student teams are debating is to have each member of the audience keep a “T-Chart” – one side they jot down arguments and points they agree with and on the other side they jot down arguments and points they disagree with. At the bottom they write down questions they have for either team. This way students are engaged even if they are not actively debating and they are then prepared to ask questions when the debate has ended.

9. **Circle Discussion/Conversation Map**
   In large or small groups have students circle up and share their reactions and responses to a particular theme or question from the reading and watching assignment. Assign one student (perhaps the one who constructed the question) to be the facilitator, another student to be the scribe or blogger (someone who jots down the key points shared in the discussion) and another student to be the discussion mapper (someone who records how the conversation unfolds by mapping where each person is sitting in the circle and how ideas and comments flowed and connected from one student to another).
10. **Group Quizzes**

Break the students up into small groups of 4 or less and have each group complete a quiz based on the reading and watching assignments. The quiz can be a mixture of fact based questions that have a right or wrong answer and discussion based questions that require the group of students taking the quiz to talk about their reactions to the question and collaborate on an answer.