**Lesson planning and engaging activities for remote, live classes**

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**Activity key:**

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| **Starter** | Quick (1-4 min) activity to warm the class up and to get everybody engaged. These do not necessarily have to relate to the subject material; some classes prefer a bit of fun, some would rather keep focussed on the subject, so judge for yourself. |
| **Recap** | Flippin’ good for recapping the pre-class material if you are using a semi-flipped or flipped classroom model. To get the best use from these materials, try to focus in on the areas where students have struggled or that you know are the threshold concepts. |
| **Application tasks** | These are more “significant” activities or problems for your students to solve, to enable them to put their LOs into practice by applying knowledge and skills to unfamiliar problems. PBL tasks, case studies etc. allow for knowledge application, integration of ideas, consolidation etc. These activities would work well if done in breakout groups if you have a large class. They also allow students to make friends and build a learning community. |
| **Tests** | Tests and quizzes. Either do them in your session or, if you run out of time, deploy them on Blackboard as a post-sessional activity. Therefore, you might want to plan these in at the end.  Consider allowing students to do tests and quizzes in breakout groups. |
| **Student-led** | These activities are particularly easy to prepare and run, and do not have to relate to the academic subject matter, so very easy to ask a member your class (particularly student reps or student lecturers) to lead these in the spirit of co-creation! |
| **Zero planning** | Easy to do off the cuff with zero or practically zero prep time |

Consider the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles when you design these activities. The best activities have multiple, flexible ways to engage. Also, consider students with particular learning differences and disabilities e.g. verbal-only information will not work for a student who is hard of hearing.

Think about how you can make your activities reflective of the diversity of your learners e.g. use diverse images, names, examples etc.

Include co-creation: share these ideas with your students and invite them to participate in your classes by running certain activities. Start with starters and then build up as the term goes on. If you have Student Lecturers or a Student Module Leader then they’ll probably be keen to help out.

**Quick lesson planning template for a live session**

**Top tips for lesson planning remotely:**

* This lesson plan is based on a **flipped classroom** approach; students have watched and summarised a “content” video. The purpose of the live class is to review, troubleshoot and consolidate this in an engaging way.
* Teaching online often **takes longer** than live sessions, so plan more time for your activities, and plan activities that could easily become “homework” at the end of the session in case you run out of time
* **Positivity** is key – don’t forget lots of praise and a positive tone to encourage and enthuse your learners
* Provide **flexible** ways for your students to engage i.e. consider Universal Design for Learning principles
* Allow learners to work in **consistent breakout groups** for at least 10 minutes in every session, so that they can form friendships and feel part of a learning community. Agree in year teams what the groups will be; personal tutors is a useful one, but sometimes allow students to suggest personal interest groups to make friends with similar interests.

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| **Time** | **Activity** | **Students will be…** | **Staff will be…** | **What’s the outcome and how do I know if the students have met it?** |
| **0-5** | **Starter** |  |  | **N/A** |
| **5 - 20** | **Recap the LOs of the pre-class material** |  |  | LO1. Students can describe the stages in making toast – *check they can describe in the chat*  LO2. Students can draw a flow diagram of toast-making – *check they can create a diagram* |
| **By this point, students should have reviewed all of the content** | | | | |
| **20-35** | **Knowledge application task and Test**  Use breakout groups for part or all of this |  |  | Putting LOs into practice e.g. MCQ, PBL, team work, solving a case study, giving some extra information. |
| **35-45** | **Reporting back / feedback** |  |  |  |
| **45-50** | **Questions and feedback.**  **Explain homework or the next lecture recording to watch** |  |  | Deploy #DMUsay survey for students (what they like, what they want me to change, any other suggestions) |
| After class:   * Keep the classroom open so that students can go back into their groups and do some work together. * Give the opportunity for students to ask questions | | | | |

**Some engaging activities for live sessions**

| **No.** | **Name of activity** | **Explanation** | **Starter** | **Recap** | **Application tasks** | **Tests** | **Student-led** | **Zero prep time** | **Notes**  examples, tips, dos and don’ts and variations |
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| **1** | **Can you guess what it is yet?** | Display part of an unusual picture, or something under the microscope, something viewed from above etc. Ask the students to guess what it is without Googling. | x |  |  |  | x |  | Amend the picture (crop, rotate etc) to make it less Googleable. You can run this like “Catchphrase” where you reveal more and more of the image until they guess it |
| **2** | **20 questions** | You think of something (perhaps related to the teaching, or not, but give them a clue either way) and the students have 20 questions to guess it. You could take the first 20 questions that appear in the chat to make the students think before typing. | x |  |  |  | x | x | If a student is leading, then you can give them an item if they need a hand |
| **3** | **Quick on the draw** | One person draws something on the whiteboard and the rest of the class try to guess what it is. | x |  |  |  | x | x | Like 20 questions, you might want to limit the number of guesses, or you might just let them guess until they get it |
| **4** | **Hangman** | Hangman on the whiteboard. | x | x |  |  | x | x | Handy if you have a word that is tricky but important to spell |
| **5** | **Connections** | A series of images, words or statements are on the board and students have to draw lines between them to link them up. Could be matching pairs or there may be multiple or wider connections. | x | x |  |  | x | x | Could be a fun starter or a tricky subject-related question. |
| **6** | **True or false** | A quick series of statements – students have to decide if they are true or false. | x | x |  | x | x | x | For zero prep, you can invent these and shout them out on the spot. |
| **7** | **The yes-no game** | Challenge a student to talk to you for 60 seconds while you ask them questions – they must not say yes or no! | x |  |  |  | x | x | Be careful not to ask any personal questions that could make a student feel uncomfortable. This one requires a bit of practice. |
| **8** | **Odd one out** | Display a number of images and ask students to identify the odd one out and explain their choice.  You could make this subject-related where there is an obvious and “correct” answer, or use this as a starter activity where the images are genuinely unrelated and students have to come up with their own justification for selecting an odd one out. | x | x |  |  | x | x |  |
| **9** | **Alphabet story** | Pick a subject; perhaps the topic of your pre-class material or last lecture. Start telling a story by saying a sentence beginning with the letter A. Students have to complete the story by saying subsequent sentences beginning with each letter of the alphabet, but which make a (silly but) coherent story. | x | x |  |  | x | x | If you have a large class with multiple answers appearing in the chat, you could just read one aloud to keep the story flowing, but it doesn’t really matter. |
| **10** | **Solve it!** | A riddle, quiz question or logic puzzle for students to solve. This doesn’t have to be subject related. | x |  |  |  | x |  | <https://www.riddles.com/>  <https://parade.com/970343/parade/logic-puzzles/>  Change the names or examples to make them Google-proof and ensure they are UDL-friendly (use names that reflect your learners’ identities) |
| **11** | **Head-to-head** | Two students battle head-to-head to persuade the rest of the class to vote for them. You could ask them to speak for two minutes about a topic, or present opposing sides of an argument etc. | x | x |  |  | x |  | This is one to prepare in advance, to make sure that you have two students who would be comfortable doing the activity |
| **12** | **WhatsUpp?** | Like spot the difference, but students have to spot what’s wrong with an image, sentence, video or other stimulus. Make it really subtle and, if subject-related, try to make the “mistake” something that the students get wrong or find tricky. | x | x |  |  |  |  | You could use something related to their learning (e.g. a periodic table with a mistake) or something random (e.g. a map of Africa with two countries swapped around) |
| **13** | **Quiz quiz** | Individually or in teams, no more than three questions. Use the whiteboard, your VLE or a voting site. | x | x |  | x | x |  | [**www.kahoot.it**](http://www.kahoot.it/)  [**www.menti.com**](http://www.menti.com/) |
| **14** | **Fastest finger first** | Usually played on a real-life whiteboard, two students compete to “splat” the keyword first. Replicate this using a virtual whiteboard and get students to use different colour pens. Who can cross/circle the keyword, image or part of a diagram quickest? | x | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| **15** | **Shout LIAR!** | Start talking about a topic, and students have to shout LIAR when you say something that is incorrect. You could allow them to unmute their mics or type in the chat. If your class enjoy a bit of fun, encourage them to unmute their mic and SHOUT the word liar as loud as they can! Use pedagogically to see if they can pick up on subtle points or common misconceptions. | x | x |  |  | x | x | Use any topic as a starter. Use something that you want to recap if you’re using this in teaching. You can focus on parts that you know the students find difficult. Make this funny by beginning a sentence that sounds like it may be incorrect, but turns out to be correct. |
| **16** | **Tweet** | Challenge your students to summarise a topic, lecture, other media or complex idea in a tweet. | x | x | x |  | x | x | Students could tweet their ideas and see if they get any responses. Or use something like pollev so that students can see and vote on each other’s ideas |
| **17** | **Matching pairs** | Create a matching pairs activity and give students a couple of minutes to do it - either on their own or breakout groups can be more fun – and see who can get a high score! | x | x |  |  |  |  | Good for recap but also good for introducing a new idea in an easy way that gives students exposure.  <https://www.educaplay.com/signup/>  Educaplay has a quick, free pairs maker. |
| **18** | **What’s the question?**  ***+ rewards for participation*** | You can make subject-related statements to use as part of a subject matter recap. Additionally, this is good for personal tutors to get to know their students and for students to get to know each other, particularly if you reward participation from all. Tutor asks a question and splits the group into two teams who play against each other. The first student to answer gets 2 points. Every subsequent answer scores the team an extra point. | x | x |  |  |  |  | Example questions for tutors – include a mixture of light-hearted ones and then quite “deep” ones.  Q. What worries you most about starting uni?  Q. What’s your favourite movie? |
| **19** | **Pauline’s pens** | This is good for recapping a complex diagram, process or any other concept that can be drawn out.  You start off by drawing either a rough outline or the first step in the process. A student then volunteers to draw the next step, while their peers guide from the chat or using mics. They continue with your guidance until the full picture is complete. | x | x |  |  | x | x |  |
| **20** | **Checking summary sheets or workbooks** | Scaffold a note-taking template for your students which is easy to upload or screenshare on a page or two. That way, a student can show their notes from the pre-sessional material and you can go through it, asking peers to comment and correct it in the chat. |  | x |  |  | x | x | Make sure to give lots of praise throughout, to encourage other students to come forward and do this. Depending on the confidence of your class, you might want to set up an anonymous submission link so the sharer is anonymous. Give time at the end for every student to correct and annotate their own work |
| **21** | **Jigsaw learning**  **e.g. jigsaw case-study** | Easy way – split students into groups and they designate themselves person A, B, C, D etc. You give them a problem to solve where the different people have to look at different evidence, then peer explain and integrate all of the information together to solve a problem.  Harder but “proper” way - Students split initially into breakout groups – they remember their group number - and designate themselves person A, B, C, D etc. You then re-split into breakout groups which are labelled with the designated letters. Each group spends some time learning about a particular sub-section of a new topic (could be by watching a video link, reading a paper, study some evidence). Then, bring the students back into their originally-numbered groups to peer-teach and fit their pieces of information together to solve a problem. |  |  | x |  |  |  | This is really good for case studies. |
| **22** | **Group MCQ test** | Create a short MCQ in your virtual learning environment. Put students into breakout groups and ask them to complete the test individually, however they are allowed to chat to their group as they do it to ask for peer assistance. |  |  | x | x |  |  | This works for other types of assessment too. |
| **23** | **Turn your learning into…**  **A lay summary**  **A poem**  **An infographic** | Create a lay-person’s explanation of a complex topic, a song, a poem, a poster, an infographic... anything that gets your students synthesising something new. You could do this individually or in groups. |  | x | x |  |  |  |  |
| **24** | **Treasure hunt** | These are quicker and easier to create than escape rooms but still rely on teamwork to solve one problem before you can unlock the next. Split students into teams and give them the first clue – stay around to help them if they get stuck. You could mix subject-related clues with clues about your university or city, for example. |  |  | x |  |  |  | Handy to help students orient themselves in induction week; you could include Google maps clues, clues hidden in your VLE to make the students explore a little bit. You could involve other departments e.g. the library, student advice centre etc. |
| **25** | **Escape room** | You can find ready-made online escape rooms, but if you can get a student to create one as part of an education-based dissertation project then it’s a great way to make a bespoke game. Get students to do the escape room in groups. Be on hand to give hints in case they get stuck. |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |
| **26** | **Case study** | Students solve a case study by working in breakout groups. Make the case study realistic by incorporating real-life examples, social media etc. Make it UDL friendly and inclusive by using diverse examples. If you’re creating a fake persona, make the persona reflect your students’ identities. |  |  | x |  |  |  | Be creative – you could integrate aspects of a treasure hunt or escape room into a case study. Create a fake twitter account or other social media for your persona. Make the students hunt for the information before they can solve the puzzle. Jigsaw learning works well with this. |
| **27** | **Flipped feedback using an “Unexemplar”** | This is very useful prior to an assessment submission where students have a draft of their work, or when students need to self- or peer-grade a mock assessment. Many teachers show their students exemplars of work at this point. It’s far more useful to show them what I call an “Unexemplar” which, rather than being very good or perfect, is of a relatively low standard. Give students the marking rubric. Students first grade the unexemplar e.g. use Menti so you can check they’ve got it right. Then they use e.g. Menti to input (a) the positive things about the work and (b) things to improve. Generate word clouds and go through these points with the class. The students then apply this “flipped feedback” to their own work. It makes it much easier for them to see their own areas for improvement. Do this in groups for added discussion. |  |  |  |  |  |  | Good for getting students to review their own work and to really think about the marking descriptors. |
| **28** | **Peer feedback** | Use your VLE to set up a Turnitin “peer feedback” link. Students submit their work and receive a peer’s work in return. Show your students how to give professional and high quality feedback, using a marking scheme and examples of how to give excellent feedback. Give students time to receive this back and to digest the feedback. |  |  | x |  |  |  | Use the DEFT to help students to process and action their feedback  [**https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/developing-engagement-feedback-toolkit-deft**](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/developing-engagement-feedback-toolkit-deft) |
| **29** | **Debate** | Give students a topic to debate in pairs or groups. Provide some guidance e.g. some questions. |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |
| **30** | **Review exercises** | Students could first review their pre-class exercises, either individually or as a group.  Give students a trickier new exercise to complete; they could do this by themselves for a period of time, then you could put them into groups to do some peer-review. |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |
| **31** | **Student-created exercises** | Use the live session time to have students construct their own question or case-study type problem to pose to other students. This requires high-level cognitive skills and the resulting problems can be shared and used by other students e.g. they swap problems half way through the session. |  |  | x |  | x |  |  |
| **32** | **Team-Based Learning (TBL)** | Students complete a timed MCQ, either in the VLE or just in a word document if not assessed. Then, put the students into groups. Allow them to repeat the MCQ together – this allows for peer discussion and collaborative correction of errors. |  |  | x |  |  |  | This is a mock-up of TBL which normally uses IF-AT scratch cards. There is now some guidance about doing TBL online, here:  <http://www.teambasedlearning.org/tbl-online/> |
| **33** | **Prepare a poster, presentation or other type of work** | Students could work in breakout groups either once (for a quick task) or every week for several weeks to prepare an assignment together. Or students might be given time in the session to work on their own piece of work, with or without support from a group. |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |
| **34** | **Polleverywhere ideas collection and voting** | Polleverywhere is free polling software. It has the facility for voters to (a) enter ideas and then (b) see and vote on everybody’s ideas. So, it’s great for collaborative working, deciding on criteria or key ideas etc. |  |  | x |  | x |  | Co-create a marking rubric |

**Useful links for creating engaging and inclusive activities**

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| **Link** | **What it’s for** |
| [**https://avatarmaker.com/**](https://avatarmaker.com/) | Avatar maker for creating diverse cartoons of people to illustrate case studies etc. |
| [**www.educaplay.com**](http://www.educaplay.com) | Free games generator for easy games e.g. matching pairs |
| [**https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2020/03/15/how-to-teach-online/**](https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2020/03/15/how-to-teach-online/) | The Teacher Toolkit website has lots of good ideas for online teaching and for quick lesson planning |