



Using Structured Worksheets Can Improve Learning Outcomes and Student Engagement

What is this Research About?

Active learning is defined as student-centred learning where students engage in the knowledge construction process. Active learning strategies can improve students' understanding of course material and enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Previous research suggests that worksheets can be an effective way to promote active learning. A worksheet is a tool used to guide students through an activity or assignment by providing a clear structure to follow. In this study, researchers investigated whether using structured worksheets can increase transparency and promote communication in an upper-year university course, and to assess the impact on student engagement and satisfaction.

What did the Researchers Do?

The researchers tested the effectiveness of structured worksheets in promoting active learning in Neuroscience classes using two cohorts of students. The worksheets included sample questions for students to work through to prepare for exams. Other workshops also provided specific instructions to guide students through group work assignments (e.g., establish group goals for the assignment, to schedule meetings, and to record group progress). At the midpoint and end of the class, students completed a survey about their engagement and satisfaction with the class activities, including the worksheets.

What did the Researchers Find?

The researchers found that students ranked the worksheets as the most beneficial for their learning. Students also rated the worksheets as enjoyable. Students reported that they found the worksheets to be helpful because they provide students with clear and organized activities to engage with the material. Some responses to open-ended questions indicated that even with the worksheets guiding the group work, some group members failed to contribute to their group projects.

SoTL

Snapshot

A synopsis of a scholarship of teaching and learning journal article

→ How to Implement this Research in Your Classroom

- Structured worksheets can be a simple and effective way to help students learn. Worksheets can also help improve group work by clarifying expectations. Worksheets can provide a clear and organized format for students to engage with course material, which helps to enhance their understanding and retention of the material. By providing students with clear and organized activities to complete, structured worksheets encourage them to engage with the material actively, which has been shown to improve their academic performance and overall learning experience. Instructors could consider incorporating structured worksheets to promote transparency and communication with students, which helps to build a more collaborative learning environment.

→ Citation

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