



# Encourage Active Participation in Learners

## UDL CHECKPOINT 8.2: Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge

— Creating tasks and assignments that challenge learners while simultaneously encouraging active participation, exploration, and experimentation can keep learners engaged with the material, thereby resulting in academic success.

### What is it?

Most people learn best by actively engaging with whatever subject or topic they are studying. With experiential and hands-on approaches, learners are able to maintain interest and become more directly familiar with the specific concepts, which can improve comfort and confidence with the topic, overall. However, it is important to note that this type of learning requires instructors to guide learners through the material and to also provide plenty of flexible resources for learners.

### Why do it?

Rote learning can create disinterest in many learners, which can result in poor academic success. However, varying the specific types of assignments and assessments while also continuously challenging learners can create a dynamic learning experience. Additionally, by encouraging participation and individual exploration of the concepts, instructors can increase interest in their learners while allowing learners to take ownership in their actual learning and academic success.

### How can I apply it?

Here are some ways that you can better encourage active participation in learners.

- **Create a balance of lecture and hands-on activities in instruction.** Keep learners engaged in the material by varying the types of instruction given during a course meeting (lecture, group-work, individual work, hands-on activities, etc.); this can help learners remain attentive and focused on the content.
- **Provide numerous resources for learners.** Using examples, demonstrating approaches, and offering flexible resources can help learners to better comprehend material, retain information, and succeed in the course.
- **Scaffold assignments and assessments.** Breaking complex assignments and projects into smaller, more accessible tasks can increase interest and individual participation in learners, which can help them stay motivated.
- **Include self-reflection in activities.** Self-reflection allows learners the chance to take ownership in their learning and better understand the areas of the course in which they are struggling; doing so can help improve a learner's interest and success in the discipline.

## Summary

Encouraging learners' interest in a course through active participation and exploration can help learners better understand concepts and succeed in the course. Additionally, it is necessary to constantly be challenging learners with new concepts to ensure that they are not becoming complacent with the course or their education, in general.