

# Learning Pauses to Transform Your Lectures

## Using Learning Pauses to Transform Your Lectures

The term *learning pause* refers to pausing the lecture (or, more specifically, the instructor's time directly expositing content) to incorporate active learning activities that focus on students processing the information from the lecture.

These activities are designed to be less time intensive than more developed active learning strategies, and they can last from seconds to about 3-5 minutes. Of course, these can be extended if desired.

In terms of overall structure, the activities can be designed to be completed in these formats:

Format	Implementation Notes
Individual	Students complete the activity on their own
Think-Pair-Share	<p>Students first do the activity on their own. Then, they pair up with a classmate to discuss their responses/answers. Finally, the pairs share out to the entire class.</p> <p>Note: Think-pair-shares work best when you ask students to write down their responses before being paired together.</p>
Small Group	<p>Students complete the activity in small groups. For these activities, 3-4 students in a group works best. To reduce class time spent organizing students in groups, you may want to consider one of the following ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilizing the same small groups throughout the semester (or vary them up every few weeks) and ask students to sit with their groups</li><li>• Use Canvas to randomize student groups</li><li>• Assign students to groups as they enter the classroom and note where they should sit (alternatively, you can use name cards to do this if you're in a classroom with tables or moveable desks)</li><li>• Randomize groups as students enter the classroom by giving students a handout/card with their group name/number on it. Have designated meeting areas for the group pre-labeled in the classroom</li></ul>

## Learning Pause Strategies

Learning Pause Strategy	Implementation Notes
<p><i>Note: any of these activities can be adapted to use in an individual, think-pair-share, or small group structure. These are organized as they are more commonly utilized; however, it's not required that you implement these strategies this particular way.</i></p>	
<p><b>Individual Activities</b></p>	
<p>Entrance Ticket Exit Ticket</p>	<p>The entrance/exit ticket can be anything you want it to be. Entrance tickets get you into the class and may be a homework problem, a list of questions, opinion regarding the reading, etc. Exit tickets get students out of the class and may be problem, answer to a question, summary of the day's lesson, muddiest point, etc.</p>
<p>Advance Organizer (K-W-L)</p>	<p>Advance organizers are visual tools to aid your students' understanding of information. Prior to delving into a topic, you would have your students complete an advance organizer.</p> <p>A K-W-L is an advanced organizer and lets you know about students' background knowledge. Ask students to divide a sheet of paper into three columns: K, W, and L.</p> <p>K = What you already KNOW; W = What you WANT to know; L = What did you LEARN. Students fill in K and W before beginning the lesson. Ask students to share their responses before beginning the lesson. The L column is filled in at the end of the lesson and can be collected as a tool to know what students took away from the day's lesson.</p>
<p>Anticipation Guide</p>	<p>An anticipation guide is a series of statements (five is generally a good number) that students are asked to agree/disagree with or asked if they believe the statements are true/false.</p>
<p>Question of the Day</p>	<p>The question of the day is a question displayed on the projector or board at the beginning of class. Students have the first 1-3 minutes of class to answer the question before it goes away. It can be a</p>

	problem, a concept question, an opinion question, or a personal experience question.
Concept Tests	Utilizing clickers, hands, or other technology, have students answer questions regarding concepts from the previous lesson.
Personal Response Cards	Personal response cards are a low-tech solution to technology such as iClickers. Students can make their own cards or you can have class sets. You can use A, B, C, D for multiple choice questions; agree/disagree; or true/false. Each “card” is a sheet of paper with one answer on it. Making each answer/card a different color helps you quickly scan the room to see how many students were correct.
Focused Listing	Ask students a question about a topic. Usually, it is something like “What do you know about X?” Give students time to list their answers individually. Then, open it up to the class as a whole and write students’ responses on the board, type into a slide or document to project, or write on a flip chart.
3-2-1 Processor	After a lesson, ask students to answer these questions: What 3 things did you learn? What 2 things are most interesting to you? What 1 question do you still have?  (You can alter these to fit your needs. For example, instead of two things most interesting, you may want learners to make two connections to previous content covered in class.)
Muddiest Point	After the lesson, ask students to write down what they are most unclear about before leaving the classroom. You can use this information to let you know what material you may need to recover or approach differently.
x-Minute Paper	Usually given at the end of class, but can be given at beginning or during the lesson to prompt discussion. Ask students to describe what they learned and what was confusing. Or, you may want them to write briefly about a question or prompt you provide.

<p>In a Nutshell</p>	<p>When someone uses the phrase “In a nutshell,” he/she is trying to state a larger idea more concisely. Ask students to summarize the reading into ____ words (or less). This forces students to think through the reading at a higher level and concisely describe the key takeaway of the material.</p>
<p><b><i>Think-Pair-Share Activities</i></b></p>	
<p>Forecasting</p>	<p>At the beginning of class, pose a question to students but leave the ending open (or answer unclear). Ask them what they think will happen. After the lesson, revisit the question and see how students</p>
<p>Think Aloud/ Think Aloud Peer Problem Solving (TAPPS)</p>	<p>In pairs, students “think aloud” as one of them works through a problem. The peer partner can ask questions to the thinking student if he/she gets stuck to try to help him/her continue to solve the problem. (Note: it’s very helpful for learners to have the instructor model this while problem-solving as learners sometimes get stuck on <i>why</i> a particular step/equation/etc. is used to solve a problem.</p>
<p>Pause Procedure</p>	<p>The pause procedure asks instructors to pause about every 12-15 minutes into a lesson and give students about 2-3 minutes to work individually or in pairs to review and rework their notes. Students can then ask questions about what they need more clarification on.</p>
<p>Note Check</p>	<p>The note check is similar to the pause procedure, but students work in pairs to summarize the most important points (covered in each 10-15 minutes of lecture) and identify any sticking points/questions they may have.</p>
<p><b><i>Small Group Activities</i></b></p>	
<p>Case Study</p>	<p>While case studies can be used at any level of depth, for a learning pause activity, you will want the case study to be relatively short and either (a) get students in the mindset for what the day’s lesson will be on, or (b) build on the content from the lecture. You may want to present the case study as an opening activity that students work to answer</p>

	prior to the lesson, and then you can have them revisit again after the lecture is over. Or, you may decide to structure the case study in parts and have students visit the case study at the beginning, middle, and end of the lecture (in this case, you'd likely be giving the students new case information with each iteration).
Group Opening Question	This is similar to the question of the day, but instead is a question posed to small groups to discuss and answer.
Group Consensus	Students are given 5-10 questions that they need to work together to discuss and come to consensus on before time is up. Make sure you give students a time limit to keep the conversation focused on the questions.
Concept Mapping	Concept maps provide insight into students' organization of content as well as the connections they see between content area. This can be an individual or group process. It can be done in or out of class.
PNI	A PNI is a three-column listing activity where learners are asked to identify positive, negative, and interesting attributes from the day's lesson. You can alter what the letters stand for if you wish to better fit your content needs. (Negative tends to work more with topics where there are drawbacks to a particular method, topic, etc. being discussed.)
Facts in Five	The Facts in Five activity builds off the board game of the same name (in which players are asked to name 5 things in a category beginning with a certain letter). For the learning activity, however, you don't have to be as structured. You may ask students to list 5 facts about two topics covered in the day's lesson (or it could even be a comparison of two different days' lessons). Or, you can make multiple categories and ask students to list 5 facts in each one (or modify to fit your needs).