



A Guide to Teaching in the Active Learning Classroom: History, Research, and Practice

Paul Baepler, J. D. Walker, D. Christopher Brooks, Kem Saichaie, Christina Petersen

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While Active Learning Classrooms, or ALCs, offer rich new environments for learning, they present many new challenges to faculty because, among other things, they eliminate the room's central focal point and disrupt the conventional seating plan to which faculty and students have become accustomed.

The importance of learning how to use these classrooms well and to capitalize on their special features is paramount. The potential they represent can be realized only when they facilitate improved learning outcomes and engage students in the learning process in a manner different from traditional classrooms and lecture halls.

This book provides an introduction to ALCs, briefly covering their history and then synthesizing the research on these spaces to provide faculty with empirically based, practical guidance on how to use these unfamiliar spaces effectively. Among the questions this book addresses are:

- How can instructors mitigate the apparent lack of a central focal point in the space?
- What types of learning activities work well in the ALCs and take advantage of the affordances of the room?
- How can teachers address familiar classroom-management challenges in these unfamiliar spaces?
- If assessment and rapid feedback are critical in active learning, how do they work in a room filled with circular tables and no central focus point?
- How do instructors balance group learning with the needs of the larger class?
- How can students be held accountable when many will necessarily have their backs facing the instructor?
- How can instructors evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching in these spaces?

This book is intended for faculty preparing to teach in or already working in this new classroom environment; for administrators planning to create ALCs or experimenting with provisionally designed rooms; and for faculty developers helping teachers transition to using these new spaces.



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