

Teaching and learning approaches and activities

Approach/activity	Description
Assignments	A longer term activity based around a particular subject area which can provide evidence of learning Can be practical or theoretical
Blended learning	Using more than one method of teaching which often includes the use of technology
Brainstorming (sometimes referred to as a thought shower)	A list or a drawing of suggestions or ideas regarding a particular theme, topic or problem
Buzz groups	Short topics to be discussed in small groups
Case studies	Can be a hypothetical situation, an actual event, or an incomplete event, which learners can discuss or act on
Closing activity	A short activity at the end of a session to enable learners to attach relevance to what they have learnt
Coaching	A one to one or small group activity which can occur spontaneously
Collaborative working	Involves pairs or groups of learners working together to solve problems, to create a product or to complete a task
Copying	Learners copy written work or what the teacher has demonstrated
Critical incident analysis	Learners explore something critical (which has occurred or which might occur) to understand it and to find alternative ways of reacting and responding to it A critical incident is one which has a positive or negative effect on something or someone
Debates	Learners or guests present a case to learners, with subsequent arguments, questions and discussions
Demonstration	A practical way of showing learners how something works
Dictation	Reading text out loud for learners to note down
Didactic	A teacher centred approach where knowledge is imparted to learners
Discovery learning	Learners try out a skill or carry out a task before being taught about it
Discussion	Learners explore a topic or the teacher can introduce a topic for the learners to discuss
Distance learning or open learning	Learning which takes place away from the organisation offering the programme/qualification Work can be issued to learners via post, email or a web-based application
Drawing	Illustrations to show how something works (by the teacher and/or learner)
e-learning/online learning	Learning which is supported or enhanced using information and communication technology (ICT) Learning which takes place in a virtual learning environment (VLE) via a device connected to an intranet or the internet
Essays	A formal piece of written or word processed text, produced by the learner to address a specific subject area
Exam/test past papers	Learners can work through past papers to gain an idea of the structure of a future exam or test

Experiential/experimental	Practical tasks enabling learners to act out, experience or experiment with a particular topic
Extension activity	An additional task which can be used to stretch and challenge learners' potential further
Flexible learning	Learning that can take place at a time and place to suit the learner and/or using different delivery approaches within a session to meet particular challenges
Flipped learning	The work normally carried out during an attended session is flipped with what would be carried out elsewhere e.g. swapping classwork and homework
Formal instruction (pedagogy)	The teacher imparts knowledge or demonstrates skills to learners
Games	A fun way of learning to enable problem solving and decision making to take place
Gapped handout	Blank spaces within a handout for learners to fill in the missing words from sentences
Group work	Enables learners to carry out a specific activity by working with others
Guided learning	Creates a bridge between whole group learning and independent learning with guidance from the teacher
Handouts	Written and/or visual information/drawings/text/pictures to promote and support learning
Homework	Activities carried out between sessions e.g. further reading and research Learning doesn't have to stop just because the session has ended
Icebreakers/energisers/team-building exercises	A fun and light-hearted way of introducing learners and topics
Individual/independent learning (andragogy)	Learners carry out tasks on their own and are in control of their own learning
Informal instruction	Learning which takes place outside of the formal environment or which is delivered in an informal way
Instruction	Formal method of teaching learners whereby the teacher shows or tells the learner what to do to achieve a particular skill; the learner then performs this or rephrases it
Interactive whiteboard	Teachers and/or learners use a board with various technological functions including linking to the internet
Journal or diary	Learners keep a record of their progress, their reflections and thoughts
Lecture	Traditional <i>teacher centred</i> technique of imparting information
Mentoring	One to one support by someone other than the teacher who is usually experienced in the subject
Micro-teaching	A short teaching and learning session Usually a simulated session taught by a trainee teacher in front of their peer group
Mind maps/spider grams	A visual way of organising information and making plans, learners can draw a circle with a key point in the middle of a page. They then branch from this with subheadings to explore and develop aspects further
Mnemonics	Remembering things by associating the first letters of words with something else For example, Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain (ROYGBIV) is Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet for the colours of the rainbow

Models	Useful where the real object cannot be seen Life models can be used e.g. in art classes, or machinery models in engineering
Participative learning	Includes everyone in the learning process
Paired work	Enables learners to carry out a specific activity with a peer e.g. problem solving or checking each other's work Can be practical or theoretical
Peer learning/tasks/assessment	Learners gaining skills and/or knowledge from their peers Learners setting tasks for their peers to carry out Learners assessing their peers
Plenary	An opportunity to summarise the session, recap what has been learnt, and relate it to the aims and objectives
Podcast	A digital, audio or video file which can be uploaded to the internet
Pose, pause, pick questioning technique	Ask a question, then pause for a few seconds so that all learners are thinking about a response. Then pick a learner to answer the question by stating their name
Problem solving	Enabling learners to find things out for themselves
Presentations	Similar to a lecture with greater use of audio-visual aids
Projects/project based learning	A long term activity enabling learners to provide evidence of, or consolidate their learning and experiences
Questions	A key technique for checking understanding and stimulating thinking
Quizzes	Fun activities to check learning by the use of panel games, online activities or other practical ways
Reading	Learners work from relevant texts/books/journals and other suitable documents including online reading
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	Assessing what has previously been learnt, experienced and achieved to find a suitable starting point for further learning and assessment
Repetition, reciting or rote learning	Learners repeat aspects such as important figures, dates or poems For example, the times tables: <i>1 x 6 is 6, 2 x 6 is 12 and so on</i>
Reports	Learners produce a document to inform, recommend and/or make suggestions based on a given topic
Research	An in-depth way of finding out answers or more information regarding a topic
Rhyme and Rap	Reciting and recalling phrases or songs to aid memory For example, <i>30 days has September, April June and November</i>
Role play	A practical activity to demonstrate learning Can be used to act out a hypothetical situation or scenario to see how learners would respond
Self-assessment	Learners decide how they have met the assessment criteria, or how they are progressing at a given point in time
Seminars	A presentation of ideas, followed by questions and a discussion
Senses learning	Learners use some or all of their senses e.g. hear, see, smell, taste and/or touch
Simulation	An imitation activity carried out when the real activity would be too dangerous. For example, the evacuation of a building when the fire alarm goes off, there's no need to set fire to the building for a simulated evacuation

Starter activity	A short activity at the beginning of a session to settle learners and focus their attention towards learning It could be a quiz to test knowledge gained so far, a discussion to open up thinking about the current subject, or an energiser activity focusing upon the session topic
Surveys	Gaining information from others
Talking	The teacher or a learner talks about a topic
Tasks	Practical or theoretical activities carried out by an individual, in pairs or a group which are relevant to the topic being taught
Task analysis/skills analysis	The breakdown of a task or a job into its smaller component parts
Teaching/training/tutoring	Educating learners in a subject, furthering their skills, attitudes, behaviours, knowledge, and/or understanding
Team teaching (co-teaching)	Facilitating a session with a colleague
Technology based learning (also see <i>blended learning</i> , and <i>e-learning/online learning</i>)	Using relevant equipment, media and materials e.g. those which incorporate visual, audio and digital uses
Tests	Written questions (e.g. open, closed, multiple choice) to test knowledge and understanding Practical activities to assess skills
Tutorial reviews	A one-to-one or group discussion between the teacher and the learner/s with an agreed purpose, e.g. discussing progress and achievements so far
Undoing	Learners can <i>undo</i> or <i>take apart</i> an object to learn how it was put together An example is taking a plug apart to see how it was originally wired
Viewing e.g. a video/TV/DVD/webinar and online recordings	Watching a recording or a live programme via various media including the internet
Virtual learning environment (VLE)	An online platform for teachers to upload learning materials to and interact with learners
Visiting speakers	An expert in the subject area speaks to the learners
Visits/field trips	Learners visit a venue relevant to the subject such as a museum
Watching	Learners watch something taking place e.g. a live demonstration, a film clip or a video
Webcast	Videos and information uploaded to the internet Similar to podcasts
Worksheets	Interactive documents which learners read, followed by responding to questions or carrying out practical activities
Workshops	An opportunity to share practice, use activities and develop knowledge and understanding in a real or simulated working environment

Approach	Strengths	Limitations	Meeting individual needs
Demonstrations	Can be supported with handouts and activities to help meet all learning preferences Can increase attention and confidence Can show a skill clearly	Equipment may not be available or in working order Larger groups may not be able to see the demonstration or have access to enough resources Individuals may not pay attention, get bored or miss something if it's demonstrated too quickly	Learners with a visual or hearing impairment can be nearer to the demonstration area Can be paced to suit learners' individual needs Repetition and reinforcement can be carried out to emphasise key aspects Questioning can be used to check understanding
Discussions	All learners can participate and share knowledge and experiences	Some learners may be shy or not want to be involved Easy to digress Teacher needs to keep the group focused and set a time limit Some learners might dominate	A discussion could help learners express themselves if they struggle with writing All learners can be involved by the use of pre-prepared questions A summary can be used to highlight key learning points
e-learning	Learning can take place anywhere a computer is available Learning can be flexible Ongoing support can be given	Learners need access to a computer and will need to be computer literate Self-discipline is needed, along with clear targets Authenticity of learner's work may need validating Technical support may be required	Learners who struggle with hand written work can create electronic documents and presentations which can also be spellchecked
Group work	Allows interaction between learners Learners learn from each other's experiences and knowledge Encourages participation and variety Rotating group members enables all learners to work with each other	Careful management by the teacher is required regarding time limits, progress, and ensuring all group members are clear with the requirements Potential for personality clashes One person may dominate Learners might get left out or be too shy to contribute Ground rules might be needed to keep the group on track Time is needed for a de-brief and feedback	Learners who are shy can help improve their confidence by getting involved and working with others Self-assessment can help individual learners see how they are progressing