

How We Learn Classroom Activity

The Classroom Activity introduces students to the context of a performance task, so they are not disadvantaged in demonstrating the skills the task intends to assess. Contextual elements include: an understanding of the setting or situation in which the task is placed, potentially unfamiliar concepts that are associated with the scenario; and key terms or vocabulary students will need to understand in order to meaningfully engage with and complete the performance task. The Classroom Activity is also intended to generate student interest in further exploration of the key idea(s). The Classroom Activity should be easy to implement with clear instructions.

Please read through the entire Classroom Activity before beginning the activity with students to ensure that any classroom preparation can be completed in advance.

Throughout the activity it is permissible to pause and ask students if they have any questions.

Resources Needed:

- Chart paper, whiteboard, or a chalkboard
- Markers or chalk
- Pencils (Students who need an accommodation may use their preferred tool for writing.)
- Scrap paper
- Some method of displaying ancillary materials¹

Resources Provided (see end of document):

- Ancillary Material
 - Student Resource

Learning Goal:

- Students will understand the context of the key concepts related to the topic:
 - People learn in different ways.
 - There are different ways to learn a concept.

Students will understand the key term:

- Learning: the gaining of knowledge or skills through experience, study, or by being taught.

Note: This definition is provided here for the convenience of the facilitator. Students are expected to understand this key term in the context of the task, not memorize the definition.

¹ Facilitators can decide whether they want to display ancillary materials using an overhead projector or computer/Smartboard, or whether they want to produce them as a handout for students.

How We Learn Classroom Activity

[Purpose: The facilitator's goal is to introduce students to the key concepts they will need to be familiar with to successfully complete the performance task.]

[Distribute scrap paper and a pencil to each student. When done, write the following on the board and put a circle around it: *What does it mean to learn?*]

[Note: The following section can be modified to accommodate various teacher-student interaction types such as a teacher-led discussion with the entire class, teacher-student discussion for remote locations with a single student, or small groups.]

Facilitator says: "To start off our classroom activity, we are going to have a class discussion. With the people around you, take two minutes and try to come up with an answer to this question: What does it mean to learn? Write down what you discuss. When you are finished, we will share your ideas with the class."

[After about two minutes, have students meet as a class to share their ideas. Ask the students to share their responses to the question out loud and record them on the board. This discussion should last about three minutes.]

[When the discussion is complete, write this on the board: *Learning: the gaining of knowledge or skills through experience, study, or by being taught.* Read the key term and its definition out loud for the students. Next, on the board write: *What are some ways you learn something for school?*

Facilitator says: "Now that we have our basic definition of learning, what are some ways that you have learned something for school? Take two minutes to discuss with the same people around you and write down what you discuss. We will share your ideas when you are finished."

[After about two minutes, have students meet as a class to share their ideas. Ask the students to share their responses to the question and record them under the question on the board. This discussion should last about three minutes.]

Possible class discussion answers (*unscripted*): [If these answers do not come up in discussion, please provide them.]

- Study the topic (exposure to the material)
- Memorization
- Write about the topic
- Projects and activities

[Display the list of topics included in the ancillary material. For students who are visually impaired read the list out loud.]

Facilitator says: "Keeping these learning methods in mind, what do you think are the best ways to learn the topics displayed? Justify your answer. Take two minutes to discuss with the same people around you and write down what you discuss. We will share your responses when you are finished."

[Repeat the list as needed out loud as students work on this task. After about two minutes, have students meet as a class to share their ideas. Ask the students to share their responses to the question and record them on the board next to each topic on the list. This discussion should last about three minutes.]

Possible class discussion answers (*unscripted*):

[Note: all of the reasons can be justified for the answers below. Encourage multiple answers and discussion for each one.]

- Elements on the periodic table (Study the topic: practicing every day with the different elements on the periodic table can make them easier to recall.)
- Names of the 50 states (Memorization: preparing flashcards is a helpful way to memorize them.)
- Where the 50 states are located (Projects: cutting out the different states and arranging them can help you learn where they are located.)
- Patience (Exposure: it is easier to learn patience if you have to practice being patient.)
- Characterization in a novel (Write about the topic: it is easier to express complex issues of characterization in a written essay.)
- Solids, liquids, and gases (Activity: it is helpful to learn about solids, liquids, and gases by doing a science experiment with water.)
- Inventions of Thomas Edison (Project: this will allow time for research and exposure to the topic that can be put into a project.)

Facilitator says: “Which method for learning each of these processes do you enjoy the most? Do any of the methods not work for you? Take two minutes to discuss with the same people around you and write down what you discuss. We will share your discussion when you are finished.”

[After about two minutes, have students meet as a class to share their ideas. Correct responses might include: I like practicing every day with the elements from the periodic table because I can learn a lot while only studying 15 minutes a day; I don’t like using flashcards to memorize things because it is boring.]

Facilitator says: “From our discussion, you should understand that there are many ways to learn about a topic and people all learn in different ways. You will learn more about how we learn in the performance task you will be completing. You are now ready to complete your performance task. Please leave your recorded notes and pencils behind to be collected.”

Ancillary Material

What do you think are the best ways to learn the following? Justify your answer.

- Elements on the periodic table
- Name of the 50 states
- Where the 50 states are located
- Patience
- Characterization in a novel
- Solids, liquids, and gases
- Inventions of Thomas Edison