

FAQs

A Guide for Presenters

Active Learning Strategies for Continuing Pharmacy Education Programs

Q: *Why do I need to use active learning strategies in my CE session?*



A: Effective January 1, 2009, the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) **requires use of active learning strategies** in the Accreditation Standards for Continuing Pharmacy Education (CPE.) As stated in **Standard 7: Teaching and Learning Methods:** “The provider must assure that all CPE activities include active participation and involvement of the pharmacist and technician.” All the new standards may be accessed using this link: http://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/CPE_Standards_Final_092107.pdf. In addition, active learning is a best practice in adult professional development whose value exists independent of the standard.

Q: *How can I meet this Standard?*

A: Some active learning strategies that have worked well in continuing pharmacy education programs include:

- Polling
- Self-Assessment
- Questions / Quizzes / Tests / Games
- Interactive Scenario
- Interactive Case Study
- Application Exercise

See the next page for descriptions and examples.

Types of Active Learning Strategies

Polling

Get to know your learners by asking about who is in the audience. Examples: "By a show of hands, how many clinical specialists are in the audience?"

- How many directors?
- How many from small/rural hospitals?
- How many from the west coast?
- How many have implemented an informatics program before?
- How many have some experience with medication reconciliation?"

Choose factors about the audience that are relevant to your topic and poll so that you and your learners can see who is there. Polling can ask questions about what the learners are doing related to the material. Relate the responses to the polling questions to the session topic.

Examples:

- "How would you describe your level of implementation of medication reconciliation processes? High? (show of hands) Medium? Low? Today you'll learn how to increase the implementation of these programs."
- "How many of you have an emergency pharmacist in your ED? How many are full-time? How many are more than half-time? How many are less than half-time? In today's session we'll show you how to get support for increasing pharmacist time in the ED."

This method can be used with an electronic Audience Response System (ARS) or with the "low-tech" version: hand-raising.



Questions / Quizzes / Tests / Games



Ask multiple-choice or true/false questions. Have participants raise their hands for the different response options or simply have them note their answer privately, then provide the answer. Questions can be used at the beginning, during and/or at the end of a session. Pre- and post-test questions can be used to start and end a session. Questions can be turned into a game such as "Jeopardy" by giving the answer and asking participants to identify the question. An example of a question used at the 2008 Summer Meeting Joint Commission session by speaker Darryl Rich was:

"For MM.2.20 – Medication Storage, which of the following was the top compliance issue scored on 2007 surveys:

- A. Refrigerator temperature checks
- B. No policy on how medications handled from removal/dispensing to medication administration and returned if not used.
- C. Medication Security
- D. Narcotic Control & Wastage"

A "Jeopardy" question in a session on active learning strategies was:

The answer is: "A hand-raising activity good for engaging an audience at the beginning of a session."
The question is: "Polling."

Self-Assessment

Have the participants complete a self-assessment tool that gives them insight into their current knowledge or skill level and helps them identify their need for the information the session will be covering. The tool can be formal (a commercially available instrument, such as the "Insight Inventory" for leadership skills (*Insight Institute, Inc.*) or an informal self-created scale that may, for example, ask participants several questions about their level of skill or experience in different aspects of your topic. For example, an informal self-assessment of presentation skills asks participants to rate their level of agreement with statements such as, "I make appropriate use of gestures when appropriate." and "I make eye contact with audience members."

Application Exercise

In an application exercise, participants are asked to apply, or think about how they will apply, what they have learned. Participants may do this type of exercise independently, such as by filling out a worksheet designed beforehand for this purpose or they can be asked to discuss it with the person next to them or meeting the challenges listed.

For example, participants can be asked to list challenges and obstacles they may face and strategies for overcoming the obstacles when implementing an informatics project or they could list first steps they will take to apply something they have learned in the session with a small group. An advantage of working with others is that they can brainstorm together about strategies for.

Interactive Scenario

A scenario describes a situation to be effectively resolved, requiring the skill(s) being taught in an educational program. The participants discuss what they think should be done in the situation. An expert gives feedback to participants. Participants can discuss in small groups, then report their ideas to the whole group. You, as the expert, give feedback on whether or not their ideas are likely to be effective. In addition, fellow participants can share experiences and feedback.

For example, for a program for supervisors on performance appraisal skills, describe a problem employee and ask how they can be most effectively managed during their performance review.

Interactive Case Study

Present a case in which you ask the participants to answer questions about the patient and their treatment. For example, what information do they need about the patient? What treatment do they recommend? How would they handle new developments in the case that you describe to them?



Q: What else is required with *the new standard*?

A: In addition to active learning strategies, the new standard **requires assessment to be a part of CE sessions** as stated in *Standard 9: Assessment of Learning*: “The provider in collaboration with faculty must include learning assessments in each CPE activity to allow pharmacists and technicians to assess their achievement of the learned content.”

Luckily, if you have well-designed active learning strategies that provide participants with feedback on whether or not they completed the activity correctly, you are simultaneously providing a means of assessment.

ASSESSMENT
is also a
requirement of all
Continuing
Pharmacy
Education
sessions.

Q: Do I have to collect, correct or *document the assessment*?

A: No. The assessment is a **self**-assessment for the participant. You must give participants feedback on how they did on a learning activity. This feedback allows them to self-assess.

For example, if you ask questions, when you provide the answer, the participants can assess themselves. This technique meets Standard 9 on assessment of learning.

Q: I am going to be presenting to a *large audience*. Will active learning strategies work in this type of session?

A: Yes. **Polling** and use of **questions** are safe bets in large groups. In addition, some active learning strategies can be done in pairs or individually.

For example, participants can be asked to talk to the person beside them. Examples include asking attendees to discuss or jot notes to themselves about a case, scenario or other question or problem.



Q: What if the audience doesn't want to do active learning? Sometimes they *just get up and leave*.

A: Although some audience members are not comfortable with active learning strategies, and may even leave, participants are most likely to engage in them if you identify a real learning need of the audience and obtain their interest by presenting in an interesting way.

Q: My session teaches *factual information*, such as new regulations, policies or new drug updates. How can I use active learning instructional strategies in this type of session?

A: Use of **questions** is ideal in this situation. Instead of stating some of your facts, ask the audience. Then elaborate with more information. Create multiple-choice or true/false questions and have the audience raise their hands in response or use color cards that they can hold up (e.g., red for "A", blue for "B", etc.) If available, you could use an Audience Response System (ARS) in this way.

Examples:

*Which of the following terms is usually used to describe drug-related problems by the stage (prescribing, transcribing, dispensing, administration) at which they occur?

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| A. Medication error | C. Potential ADE |
| B. Preventable ADE | D. Medical error |

*What is the rate of medication errors from highest to lowest likely to be discovered using the following error detection techniques: 1. chart review, 2. incident reporting, or 3. direct observation?

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| A. 1, 2, 3 | C. 3, 1, 2 |
| B. 3, 2, 1 | D. 1, 3, 2 |

**From Summer Meeting 2008 session, "How to Better Detect and Prevent Adverse Events and Medication Errors in Your ICU", Brian L. Erstad*

Q: How *can I learn more* about effective instructional strategies and assessments for continuing pharmacy education?

A: Four one-hour self-study CE programs from ASHP on developing and delivering continuing pharmacy education programs can be found via this link: www.ashp.org/web_ce → Click on "Education." Additional resources are listed at the end of each of these programs.