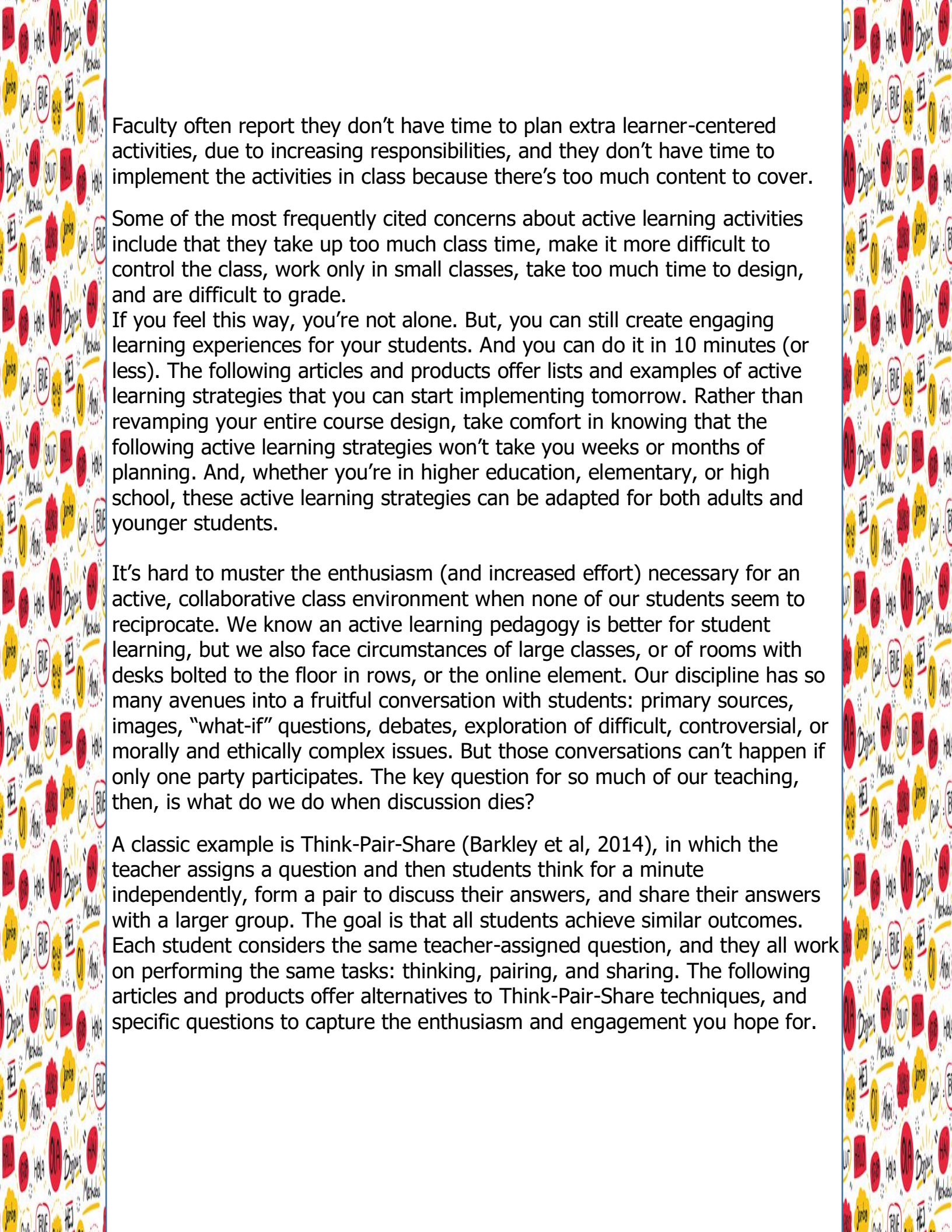# Active Learning Strategies, Techniques, and Examples You Can Use in Your Course

With active learning practices on the rise, educators are seeking pedagogically sound information about the best ways to integrate and execute active learning techniques within their own teaching. But what exactly is active learning and why is it important?

Active learning asks students to engage with the course material on a deeper level through reading, writing, talking, and listening exercises that push them into new ways of thinking about what they're learning. What we next need to know about active learning won't be all that easy to figure out, but it's time we moved from generic understandings to the specific details. The following articles, free reports, and programs do just that—provide examples, strategies, and techniques of active learning that you can start applying to your own class today.

The following topics will guide you in your active learning journey:

"Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in class listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves." – A. Chickering and Z.F. Gamson, "Seven principles for good practice," AAHE Bulletin 39 (March 1987), 3-7.

Faculty often report they don't have time to plan extra learner-centered activities, due to increasing responsibilities, and they don't have time to implement the activities in class because there's too much content to cover.

Some of the most frequently cited concerns about active learning activities include that they take up too much class time, make it more difficult to control the class, work only in small classes, take too much time to design, and are difficult to grade.

If you feel this way, you're not alone. But, you can still create engaging learning experiences for your students. And you can do it in 10 minutes (or less). The following articles and products offer lists and examples of active learning strategies that you can start implementing tomorrow. Rather than revamping your entire course design, take comfort in knowing that the following active learning strategies won't take you weeks or months of planning. And, whether you're in higher education, elementary, or high school, these active learning strategies can be adapted for both adults and younger students.

It's hard to muster the enthusiasm (and increased effort) necessary for an active, collaborative class environment when none of our students seem to reciprocate. We know an active learning pedagogy is better for student learning, but we also face circumstances of large classes, or of rooms with desks bolted to the floor in rows, or the online element. Our discipline has so many avenues into a fruitful conversation with students: primary sources, images, "what-if" questions, debates, exploration of difficult, controversial, or morally and ethically complex issues. But those conversations can't happen if only one party participates. The key question for so much of our teaching, then, is what do we do when discussion dies?

A classic example is Think-Pair-Share (Barkley et al, 2014), in which the teacher assigns a question and then students think for a minute independently, form a pair to discuss their answers, and share their answers with a larger group. The goal is that all students achieve similar outcomes. Each student considers the same teacher-assigned question, and they all work on performing the same tasks: thinking, pairing, and sharing. The following articles and products offer alternatives to Think-Pair-Share techniques, and specific questions to capture the enthusiasm and engagement you hope for.

"Enabling interaction in a large class seems an insurmountable task." That's the observation of a group of faculty members in a department at the University of Queensland. It's a feeling shared by many faculty committed to active learning who face classes enrolling 200 students or more. How can you get and keep students engaged in these large, often required courses that build knowledge foundations in our disciplines? How do you actively engage students in your classroom? The following articles and products offer solutions to incorporating active learning in large classes, and provides answers to the questions that surround active engagement.

Most of us think we know what active learning is. The word engagement quickly comes to mind. Or, we describe what it isn't: passive learning.

Yet passivity seems to be the norm for many college courses: students passively try to learn information from teachers who unwittingly cultivate a passive attitude in their learners. As the subject matter experts, many faculty are reluctant to give up some control. We know the material, there's a lot to cover, and let's face it, going the lecture route is often just plain easier for everyone. We "get through" the material, and students aren't pressed to do anything more than sit back and take notes. Teacher and student thus become complicit in creating a passive learning environment. The following articles and products describe what passive learning is, and how active learning vs passive learning compare.

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