## Teaching and Learning at NWIC

The Connection Between
Active Learning
and
Student Success

### How People Learn

People *construct* their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe, or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant. In any case, we are active creators of our own knowledge. To do this, we must ask questions, explore, and assess what we know.

### Gaining Knowledge through Instruction - Instructivism Construction of Knowledge – Constructivism

Instructionism refers to educational practices that are teacher-focused, skill-based, product-oriented, non-interactive, and highly prescribed. The focus is on the process of teaching. Examples include lecture and worksheets and multiple choice exams.

Constructivism refers to educational practices that are student-focused, meaning-based, process-oriented, interactive, and responsive to student interest. The focus is on the process of learning. Examples include case studies, real world projects, cooperative activities.

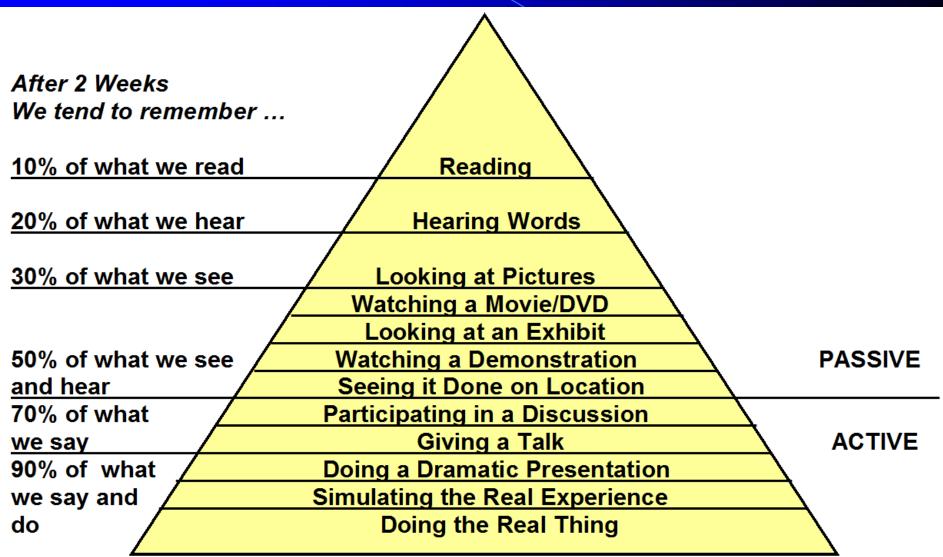
#### The Constructivist Learning Environment

- •Teachers <u>facilitate</u> the learning environment rather than teach so that students can formulate and test their own ideas, draw conclusions and inferences, and convey their knowledge in a collaborative learning environment.
- •Teacher must understand students' preexisting conceptions and guide the activities to address this knowledge and then <u>build on the knowledge they already have</u>.
- •Teachers encourage students to <u>assess</u> how the activity is helping them gain understanding. By questioning themselves and their strategies, students become expert learners as they learn how to learn. The students then have the tools necessary to become life-long learners.

In the constructivist learning environment, Learning is

- Constructed
- Active
- ✓ Reflective
- ✓ Collaborative
- ✓ Inquiry- or Problem-Based
- Evolving

### Active vs. Passive Learning How People Learn



### **Examples of Active Learning**

- Case studies
- Pair and share
- Collaborative/Cooperative learning in class, out of class
- Simulations and Games
- Projects, internships, service learning, work
   experience put knowledge into practice
- Peer teaching and mentorship
- Apprenticeships
- Portfolios

# Current Examples of Active Learning at NWIC

- Case Studies writing and teaching case studies Evergreen State College
- Service Learning, Internships, Work Experience Native Environmental Science, Information Technology, Chemical Dependency Studies, Early Childhood Education
- Critical thinking methodologies Read around the room and discuss, critical association, landmarks and student self-assessment
- Use of student blogs to share ideas Math
- Reflective writing and journaling Writing Courses, BIOL 104
- Round table discussions BIOL 104
- Seminar First Year seminar and NES seminar
- Place-based field activities NES program
- Student discussion in online courses
- Native Language instruction integrated with cultural restoration

#### Plans and the Future

- The teaching and learning toolkit
- The teaching and learning websites
- Action-based research in teaching and learning – developing a culture of scholarship in teaching and learning at NWIC
- Cultural integration in teaching and learning