Active Learning Strategies for Asynchronous Faculty

Theory → *Strategy* Planning Guide for Faculty

Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy)

Core idea: Adult learners are self-directed, goal-oriented, and motivated by relevance

Effective asynchronous strategies:

- Application-first assignments (SOAP notes, referral justifications, patient education tools)
- Case-based activities grounded in real clinical scenarios
- Assignments framed as professional tasks rather than academic exercises

Constructivism

Core idea: Learners construct knowledge by integrating new information with prior experience

Effective asynchronous strategies:

- Progressive case studies released in stages
- Open-ended clinical questions with justification requirements
- Activities that require decision-making before feedback is provided

Experiential Learning

Core idea: Learning occurs through cycles of experience, reflection, and application

Effective asynchronous strategies:

- Case simulations with follow-up outcomes
- Reflection prompts tied to clinical decisions
- "What would you do differently?" scenarios after feedback

Situated Cognition

Core idea: Learning is strongest when it occurs in realistic, context-rich environments

Effective asynchronous strategies:

- Clinical decision trees and branching scenarios
- "Choose your path" case activities
- Contextual prompts (rural vs. urban care, limited resources, time constraints)

Social Constructivism

Core idea: Learning is enhanced through interaction and shared meaning-making

Effective asynchronous strategies:

- Structured discussion boards with defined roles
- Peer review of clinical plans or patient education materials
- Discussion prompts that require adding clinical nuance or alternative perspectives

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Cognitive Load Theory

Core idea: Learning suffers when cognitive demands exceed working memory capacity

Effective asynchronous strategies:

- Low-stakes, untimed knowledge checks
- Clear instructions with consistent formats
- Feedback-focused assessments rather than punitive grading

Metacognition

Core idea: Learners improve when they reflect on how they think and make decisions

Effective asynchronous strategies:

- Short, targeted reflection prompts
- Decision justification exercises
- "What assumption influenced your choice?" questions

Scaffolding

Core idea: Learners need structured support that gradually decreases as competence increases

Effective asynchronous strategies:

- Curated resource packs (guidelines, tools, references)
- Structured templates early in the course
- Gradual removal of supports in later modules

Strong asynchronous NP courses are not built on more content or more activities. They are built on intentional alignment between **theory**, **strategy**, and **practice**.

the Elevated NP

Empowering NP Educators to Teach, Lead, and Thrive

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