Active Learning: Using Picturebooks to Introduce Theory

Active Learning Technique

Active Learning Technique Components

1. Select a set of picture books that introduce, relate, explore, etc. the concepts or theories that you’re addressing in class.

2. Bring picture books to class (hardcover is best), and preface the activity by asking students to read their books with an eye and ear for whatever your concepts/theories are.

3. Instruct students to read them aloud in small groups.

4. Have students discuss the picture book and write a group reflection (or answer guided questions) on how the book introduces, explains, explores, etc. the concepts/theories related to your course topic.

5. Ask the small groups to report back to the class. If multiple groups read the same book, their comments may build upon (or counter) one another.

6. Facilitate the discussion by asking students to connect ideas to one another (across picturebook texts) and to the other course materials that students are engaging with (e.g., articles, chapter readings, etc.)

Benefit to Student

1. It provides something tangible and accessible (e.g., picturebook) to explore something abstract (e.g., concept or theory).

2. It gets students engaged with course material in a variety of communication modes - oral, visual, and written.

3. It provides an opportunity for the exploration of multiple perspectives on a single text - amongst their small groups and with the whole class.

4. It provides an opportunity for intertextual connections (across the picturebook set as well as between picturebooks and other course texts) and cross-disciplinary connections (e.g., visual art and literature).