

Activity: What is Active Learning?

A. Why?

Education research shows that students learn better when they are active participants in class, compared to passive listeners of lectures. This **active** kind of learning includes obvious things like answering questions in class, but it can also include team activities and quick feedback to the instructor.

This activity is designed to help you practice some of the techniques we'll be using this semester. Activities aren't for evaluating or judging your knowledge, and they don't count toward your final grade. (Except that if attendance drops off too much, activities might be used as a way to take attendance.)

B. Outcomes

The expected outcomes from this activity are:

- Learn how to form small groups, discuss questions, and form answers.
- Practice the use of email for quickly giving the instructor feedback during class.
- Lists of what topics you think this course might/should/could cover.
- A list of reasons why this course might help you someday (or could've helped in the past).

C. Team Roles

Get together in groups of four; if possible, at least one person should have a wi-fi-enabled laptop. Assign these roles among yourselves.

1. The captain: Makes sure that people follow their roles and that everyone has fun.
2. The speaker (has a laptop): Communicates with the instructor and the rest of the class.
3. The recorder: Takes notes of the discussion.
4. The reflector: Assesses team performance and keeps the captain on task. (“Assess” in the sense of “suggesting ways to improve performance” [even if performance is great!], not “assess” in the sense of “judging” or “grading”.)

Once the roles have been chosen, discuss the following questions (and of course, all members should contribute to the discussion).

D. Questions

As a group, discuss the questions below and submit your results as requested.

1. (Vocabulary Brainstorm) What words/phrases come to mind when you think of the topic “Computer Organization and Assembler Language Programming”? Spend a few minutes and type up a list. Email it to f09cs350@gmail.com with the subject “1B brainstorm”.
2. From the list for Question 1, pick any or all of the words/phrases that you think we should or might want to cover in the course. Assign rough priorities if you like: High/medium/optional.) Email the list to f09cs350@gmail.com with the subject “1B priorities”.
3. List one or more situations you've been in where it would've been helpful to know more about assembler-level programming or about how computers are organized internally. Type up the list and email it to f09cs350@gmail.com with the subject “1B situations”.