

The Massage Educator

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53%

Practicing ABMP members who have a college degree (two-year, four-year, or graduate), according to the 2009 ABMP Member Survey.

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ACTIVE LEARNING

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

Active learning is a broad educational term that refers to several models of instruction where the learner creates and takes responsibility for his or her own learning. Reading a textbook; listening to a lecture; looking at pictures, graphs, or exhibits; or watching a video or a demonstration are forms of passive learning and have an important place in massage curricula. However, educational research demonstrates that well-organized active learning experiences lead to better student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction, improved grades, increased communication skills, higher-level and critical thinking skills, teamwork, and motivation to learn.¹

A MODEL FOR ACTIVE LEARNING

There are a variety of models for active learning; one such model is shown on page 3. It suggests that active learning involves two types of dialogue and two types of experiences.

1. Dialogue with self. When students “dialogue with self,” they must reflect on a topic and explore what they think and feel. Students might keep a journal, prepare their thoughts in writing before sharing them with others, or add items to a learning portfolio. Such activities help students develop values, ethics, and critical thinking skills.

2. Dialogue with others. Research indicates that students retain 70 percent of what is said in a class discussion.² Small and large class discussions, posting ideas to online forums, or working on a group project provides students with information on alternate problem-solving strategies, points of view, and insights into other people and their drives and motivations.

3. Experience of observing. When students watch a demonstration or video, view an exhibit, or even listen to a lecture, they have an experience of observing. We turn this experience into an active learning activity if we structure it in such a way that it includes a



think–pair–share

The Think–Pair–Share activity can help you turn a lecture or demonstration into an active learning experience. At a certain point, stop your lecture and give students a question to answer or a problem to solve. Have students work the first five minutes alone (think). Next, instruct them to discuss their ideas with another student (pair). Finally, have students communicate their ideas with the class (share).

This simple activity keeps lectures engaging and ensures that students pay attention to content and apply critical thinking skills.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Rubrics

USEFUL ASSESSMENT TOOLS
FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

A rubric is an assessment tool used to measure the degree to which a student meets the criteria for demonstration of a particular skill, either cognitive or practical. While creating rubrics requires some thought during the development of an assignment, they significantly reduce the amount of time instructors spend evaluating student work. Rubrics are useful at four stages during an assignment.

1. Pre-assessment. If you hand out a rubric when an assignment is announced, students can use it to understand your expectations and the criteria they must meet to achieve a particular score.

2. Student self-evaluation. Before a student hands in work or performs a skill, he can use a rubric as a form of self-assessment to determine his strengths and the areas that need improvement.

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SAMPLE RUBRIC

Skill	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
(State a learning objective.)	(Describe identifiable characteristics that reflect mastery performance.)	(Describe identifiable characteristics that reflect good performance.)	(Describe identifiable characteristics that reflect a need for improvement.)
Demonstrate the correct application of petrissage on the posterior leg.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correct lift in tissue shown during stroke.• Strokes were rhythmic and evenly paced.• Strokes were used to cover the entire body area.• Strokes were delivered at a speed and depth appropriate for the client.• More than one type of petrissage stroke demonstrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More lift in tissue is needed.• Strokes were rhythmic, but pacing was too slow or too fast.• Strokes were used over most of the body area.• Stroke speed and depth need minor adjustments to address client needs.• Only one type of petrissage was demonstrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little or no lift in tissue was demonstrated.• Strokes were erratic and unevenly paced.• Strokes were not applied to the majority of appropriate body areas.• Stroke speed and depth was too fast, slow, light, and/or deep.• Only one type of petrissage was demonstrated.

“A TEACHER AFFECTS ETERNITY;
HE CAN NEVER TELL WHERE HIS INFLUENCE
STOPS.” —HENRY BROOKS ADAMS

ANNOUNCING ABMP’S ONLINE EDUCATION CENTER

ABMP recognizes the important role advanced education can play in the career of a massage therapy instructor. That’s one of the reasons why we’ve launched the ABMP Online Education Center, which brings you engaging online continuing education courses. We are so excited to share our new offerings with you that we’re providing ABMP members with a complimentary course, “Experience ABMP’s E-Learning While Discovering Myofascial Massage.” Take the class and earn one continuing education (CE) hour, NCBTMB-approved. ABMP’s online courses are:

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We hope you enjoy our online courses and get the information you need to enrich your practice and stay inspired. As always, we’re here when you need us. **Expect more** from ABMP. 🍏

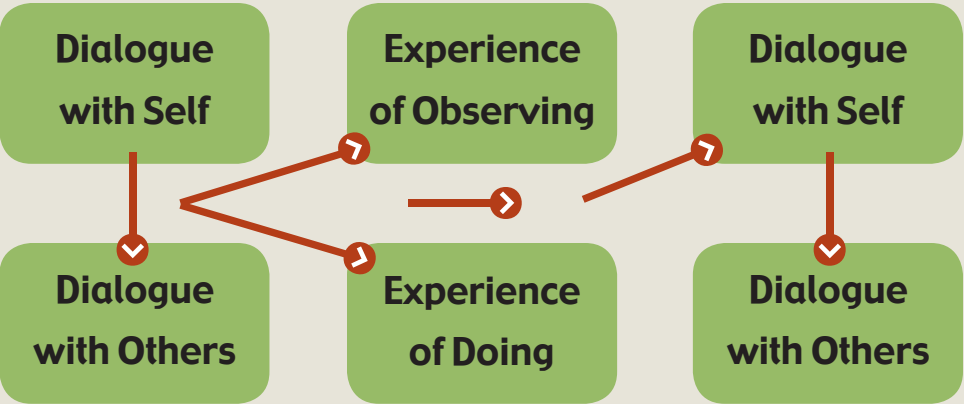


FIGURE 1

dialogue with self or with others. Explore the Think–Pair–Share activity in this issue for one idea of how you might structure experiences of observing.

4. Experience of doing. Researchers believe that 90 percent of what students say and do during dramatic presentations, during simulations of real experiences, and while doing the real thing are retained.² In massage school, experiences of doing are abundant because you can’t learn massage without giving and receiving massage. The question is how to best structure these experiences so that students develop a full range of skills including better communication and critical thinking. One idea is to teach students how to give and receive good feedback as we discussed in the last issue of *The Massage Educator* (see the resources for giving and receiving feedback at ABMP.com in the “Massage School Instructors” section). Another idea is the use of highly defined skill sets outlined on grading rubrics, as discussed in the “Rubrics” article in this issue.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER When these four types of activities are properly connected, the impacts are cumulative. Think about how you frame learning experiences to better integrate them. Can you have students dialogue with self and others, before and after having an experience of observing and doing? How can you implement these processes into your classroom?

CAUTIONS WITH ACTIVE LEARNING The use of active learning strategies has many benefits, but only if the activities are carefully designed by the instructor to provide a meaningful framework for students. Additionally, active learning works best with classes of students who are already bonded and demonstrate a degree of learning independence. In early classes, when learners don’t have as much confidence in classmates or in themselves as learners, more traditional strategies help build a foundation so that active learning can be used in later classes. 🍏

NOTES
1. C. Bonwell and J. Eison, “Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom,” in AEHE-ERIC Higher Education Report #1, (Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 1991).
2. E. Dale. Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching, 3rd ed. (New York: The Dryden Press, 1969).
3. Ibid.



3. Assessment. During scoring and grading, rubrics help instructors remain focused on the pre-determined criteria and the standards of a given set of skills.

4. Post-assessment. Scored rubrics provide students with clear explanations of their strengths and areas that need improvement. Students understand how and why they received a particular grade.

COMMON FEATURES OF RUBRICS

Rubrics can take a variety of forms and range from very simple to very complex. They share three common features.

First, rubrics focus on measuring the criteria for the demonstration of knowledge, behaviors, or skills that are stated in class or course learning objectives. They are based on well-written learning objectives.

Second, rubrics use a range to rate performance (i.e., excellent, good, fair, poor).

Finally, rubrics define specific performance criteria, arranged in levels to indicate the degree to which a learning objective has been met.

CREATION OF RUBRICS

Rubrics take some initial time to develop and refine, but once they are in place, they save instructors time by streamlining assessment and helping students rapidly improve their skills.

To create a rubric, review the example on page 2 and:

1. Define the learning objectives you want to assess.
2. Chose the criteria that indicate the learning objective has been met.
3. Clarify the criteria by providing a range of example behaviors.
4. Place the information on a grid.

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

The use of rubrics can significantly improve students' performance on assignments and skill assessments and help them become better critics of the quality of their own work. Rubrics force instructors to clarify their criteria for a particular skill or behavior in very specific terms. This lets students know how and what will be evaluated so that they can prepare accordingly.

Rubrics for practical skills (such as the evaluation of massage strokes) develop students' awareness about the criteria they should use to assess peer performance. This supports students as they strive to give useful feedback on the quality of peer massages. Rubrics promote fair, objective, and consistent assessment from teachers that is less likely to be challenged by students, thereby reducing classroom conflict. They also ensure that students have clear, meaningful feedback they can integrate to improve their skills. 🍏



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