

Active Learning in General Chemistry: Jill Robinson & Students

Student 1: I think that class time in Dr. Robinson's class is used very wisely. We're using every minute of class time to learn new material.

Student 2: She's really big on having the students do a lot of practice problems and doing demos. That's so much more interesting than just sitting in lecture like when I was in undergrad. It actually engages the students, and physically having to do the problems really holds the students accountable so they are keeping up with the material, making sure everything's still in their mind, versus just 'bring a blanket and just pass out.'

Student 3: Dr. Robinson uses Learning Catalytics so she can actually see if we're understanding the material that she's teaching in class at that moment. It's also an opportunity to get to know the student next to you, because then we get to interact and ask questions.

Student 4: It gives you the name of your partners next to you and so with that you can just be like, "Oh, hey Kate, did you get this answer?" and if you didn't you could like, "Oh, well, what happened? What did you do? What did I do? Oh, I see what you did. Okay." And then, like, you understand now.

Student 5: It's pretty useful. It helps to give the professor an idea of what students are struggling on during class, and it also helps to give the students a chance to participate, but it's also not super high stress. We can answer questions incorrectly without feeling like we're being quizzed, in a way.

Jill K. Robinson, Ph.D. Senior Lecturer, Indiana University: So active learning, I think, makes the classroom much more fun for students. They get to know one another better. They can also better self-assess what they know and don't know, because they have a chance to wrestle with the ideas in the classroom. Other things I've noticed since I've used active learning is attendance has gone up a lot, students' excitement for the material has gone up a lot, and they've become much more proficient at teaching one another, and they meet outside the classroom more regularly in groups to work on homework.