Menu of Facilitation Activities

1. Think-Pair-Share

(e.g. www.brown.edu/about/administration/sheridan-center/teaching-learning/effective-classroom-practices/think-pair-share)

 This is a simple cooperative activity. The facilitator poses a question or a problem. The students spend a minute or two on their own thinking about the answer and then pair up to share their solutions or answers for a further few minutes. If pairs aren't easy to form, use a combination of pairs and threes. The facilitator can then ask a few students to share their thoughts with the whole class.

2. Brainstorming

(e.g. www.niu.edu/facdev/resources/guide/strategies/brainstorming.pdf)

 You ask a group (small or large) to think spontaneously of ideas in response to a catalyst topic, question or problem. The contributions are given and you (or a nominated 'scribe') record them quickly, for example on a whiteboard, overhead projector (OHP), or blank PowerPoint slides, without any selection, criticism or organising/categorising of the ideas in the first instance. Later, ideas can be collated and analysed; this process can help break down and explore new and challenging concepts.

3. Snowballing

(e.g. www.uwo.ca/tsc/resources/resources_graduate_students/ta_handbook/leading_discussions/discussion_models.html)
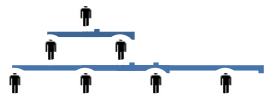
 Begin by giving individual students a few moments to consider a question or problem alone; you can encourage them to jot down a few thoughts on paper. Then ask your students to work in pairs for a few minutes, to share their findings or ideas with their partner. The next step is to move from pairs to fours, fours to eights and so on (depending on the size of the group and the time available), until the whole group is re-convened into a plenary situation.

4. Demonstration

*(e.g. www.open.edu/openlearnworks/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=52629&printable=1)*

 This is where the facilitator shows the students how something is done. Requires complete concentration on the demonstration with clear and detailed commentary. Should be followed by students' practice of the skill being demonstrated and other learning activities such as a written description.

Similarly students can be demonstrate a skill or activity that they have practised or acquired to the rest of the group.

5. Simulations and Games

(e.g. http://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/simulations/index.html)
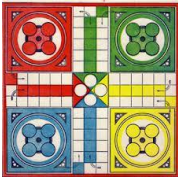
This is where students complete an activity within a framework of rules towards a given objective. It can support understanding of concepts and acquisition of knowledge within a creative learning context. Simulation games are characterised by some of these features: rules, moves, turn-taking, winners and losers, success and failure.

6. Question and Answer

(e.g. http://teachertools.londongt.org/?page=questioningTechniques; https://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/resources/refining-teaching-methods/asking-questions-to-improve-learning/;
http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/engaging-students/using-effective-questions.html)

Used within a whole class, groups or pairs to elicit information and explanation to develop knowledge and understanding or to share existing knowledge experience or understanding from within the whole group. Questions can be 'open' or 'closed', 'higher order' or 'lower order' and can be used throughout any session.

7. Presentation

(e.g. https://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/resources/refining-teaching-methods/improving-presentation-style/; http://www2.hull.ac.uk/lli/skills-development/idl/essential_it/presentation.aspx)

Methods of presenting information in a predominantly one-directional way: the ideas, information and/or arguments are conveyed from the lecturer (or video or display) to the student(s). The principle is based on you as 'the expert', selecting and shaping ideas and information, and presenting these to the students. This activity often includes exposition which is where the lecturer provides explanation of the academic content to the students. As you will be facilitating interactive activity-based sessions, this 'teaching-oriented' approach will play a smaller role in your sessions.

8. Student Presentations

(e.g. https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/sheridan-center/teaching-learning/effective-classroom-practices/student-presentations)

Individual or groups of students deliver a short, prepared presentation to the whole class, on a topic selected by the tutor or the student/group. Structured guidance is given to the students beforehand about length and structure of presentation, use of visual aids and so on.

9. Role Play

(e.g. https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/shutel/2014/07/04/role-play-an-approach-to-teaching-and-learning/; http://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/6089.pdf; https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessing-role-play-and-simulation)

This is where students 'take on' or enact a specified role in a simulation. Thought to provide insight into self and others and to gain experience and practice at taking on a particular role not yet experienced, students act out the roles of those in a presented situation – for example, acting as key protagonists in a court of law, professional colleagues on a hospital ward, national security teams in a diplomatic crisis situation, or as 'lecturers', 'students' and 'peer-observers'. This can be followed by a de-briefing session and by self-evaluation and/or peer-evaluation by the 'players'.

10.   Jigsaw

(e.g. http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/coursedesign/tutorial/jigsaw.html)
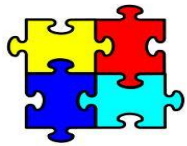
Facilitators can build dynamic and inter-activity into the ways in which they set up different groupings in the classroom: Group A can have X information and Groups B & C can have Y and Z information. At the first stage, each of these groups will review, discuss and evaluate the information that they have (X, Y or Z, respectively). At stage two new groups will form that include representatives from Groups A, B and C, so the new groups can explore and evaluate solutions, make decisions, or negotiate views based on the combined X, Y and Z information.

Adapted from the University of Exeter LTHE Programme