

Active Learning in Technical Services Education

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Technical Services Education SIG (Brian Dobreski, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, USA; Heather Moulaison-Sandy, University of Missouri, USA; Karen Snow, Dominican University, USA)

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ABSTRACT

Technical services educators have needed to demonstrate creativity and foresight in providing venues for their students, especially in online classes, to engage meaningfully with material. In the past year, that has also meant facilitating learning in the midst of a global pandemic. In acknowledgement of the necessity of engaging students, especially online, this panel on active learning in technical services education will bring together panelists in discussion with the audience to share their expertise and offer insights into pedagogical best practices.

A number of technical services courses were already being taught online when the COVID-19 pandemic required many schools to move all their in-person courses to a virtual environment. Although the modality of many technical services classes might not have changed, the disposition of the student body fundamentally did. Students were stressed and worried, starting in spring 2020 and continuing to present. The challenge then has become educating students more distracted than usual, while being compassionate and understanding.

Technical services education has fundamentally shown itself to be resilient in this capacity, with efforts being made to engage students through active learning strategies. Active learning can be defined as activities that students do to construct knowledge and understanding. In other words, instead of passively observing lectures and taking notes, students are expected to take a more central role in their learning by, for example, collaborating with fellow students, solving problems posed by the instructor, and discussing case studies. Active learning strategies are effective due to their focus on encouraging students to construct new knowledge and to engage in higher-order thinking.

Active learning techniques are often explained with physical classrooms in mind. However, what about active learning in online classrooms? Can an online instructor facilitate active learning in the same way as an instructor in a physical classroom? In-person classroom engagement will always be different than it is online, but that does not mean active learning strategies cannot be applied in online courses.

The panel will begin with a discussion of what active learning means in library and information science (LIS) education, and in technical services education in particular, with consideration given to challenges related to using active learning techniques during the COVID-19 pandemic. Next, it will look to both best practices and illustrations of active learning in technical services, providing concrete examples for the audience to consider. Finally, the panel will discuss strategies for engaging students in online classes, using the time to solicit input from audience members in a discussion of the topic. Audience members will be encouraged to ask questions and provide their own ideas for active learning in technical services education courses, both in-person and online.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

cataloging; classification; metadata; online learning; pedagogy

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

technical services; education; active learning