Ideas for engaging activities

**Think Pair Share**: Students ponder the answer to a question (think) and then share their thoughts with a neighbor (pair). Can then share back with the whole group (share).

**One-minute writing** (or 3 or 5 minute writing): Provide students with a prompt and ask them to write quietly for a pre-determined amount of time (1-5 minutes). Prompts can include: what is the muddiest point? (1 min); summarize the most important information we have discussed today (3 min); apply what we have been discussing to new situation “x”, and include all relevant details (5 min).

**Three Points Summary**: Students are asked to summarize the three most important points after a short introduction to the topic.

"**Jigsaw**" technique: Divide class into groups of 4, and give one person in each group a different piece of content to learn. Re-group students by content area so they can work together to become experts on that topic; then they return to their original groups and teach each other their unique information (they are each a piece of the jigsaw puzzle).

**Problem solving using real data**: Present the students with data and ask them to discuss with each other what the data might mean, or what is causing the outcome being presented.

**Concept mapping**: Start with a focus question (e.g.: how do humans affect the salmon population?). Provide (or generate with the students) words that are key to the focus topic. Ask students to begin with one of the words from the list and then use a line & “linking words” to denote the connections between this key word and the next they select. They continue like this until all the words from the list have been included, and additional lines and “linking words” have been added to any related key words, where possible.

**Word Pictures**: After introducing students to a topic – give students a big piece of paper and ask them to use images to describe what they understand about the topic. Could also ask students to use a timeline to describe the topic they have learned about, if appropriate.

**Analogies**: Ask students to create an analogy about a topic you have introduce to them, and have them share with groups first – selecting the best from each group to share with the whole class (i.e.: how are each component of the immune system like a different character from The Lord of the Rings).

**Note cards activities**: Ask students to bring (or give to them) 3x5 note cards, which you can use to collect many types of information from students. For example: ask students to write down on note cards what was most interesting to them; most confusing; a specific question they want answered. These can be anonymously passed around so all the students can see what others were thinking. Groups can vote on the one they would like to talk about next as a class.

**Predictions**: Before sharing data or the information, ask students to predict the outcome, or write down what they already know about the topic. They can share it verbally; use a think pair share, or write it on notecards to be passed back to faculty.

**Game Based Learning**: uses competitive exercises, either pitting the students against each other or through computer simulations. Can be as simple as a jeopardy game of your own design, or a more complex pre-designed game.

**Role Playing**: Each student acts out the role of a person affected by an issue relevant to your topic or circumstances, or diseases like cancer, or genetic mutations, or an injured athlete. Or students look at the topic from the perspective of a character, who could affect (or be affected by) a chosen topic.