

# **The Thoughtful Classroom: A Framework for a Successful Adult Education Classroom**

September 2015



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## Rationale

When I decided to do this mini grant, it was after much thought. (Who knew that would become the title of my mini grant?) As a member of the Mentor Teaching Team, as well as the Disabilities Committee and Math Advisory Group, the thought continued to come to me as to how I teach, why I teach what I do, why I use strategies based in research and ultimately, why there might be a need for a framework for success in our classrooms.

Success does not happen because we want it to; success happens because we are a catalyst for our students in bringing about skill sets that will promote success. In thinking of all the things I have tried, research I have read, online courses I have taken and professional development activities that I have participated in surrounding this topic, I truly had no idea where to begin. How does one take everything they do in class, and everything that is in one's head, and put it into words succinctly?

I began to do research on different components that I use in my class that is successful in the hopes of finding key ideas, and I came upon [www.ThoughtfulClassroom.com](http://www.ThoughtfulClassroom.com)

This website had everything on it that I wanted to express to the field of New Hampshire Adult Education. This website took research from experts in the field and created a "one stop shopping center" for educators in whatever capacity you might be. In researching this site, this became for me my guide as to how I wanted to explain a framework for success for New Hampshire Adult Education.

Our students are not traditional; they come from all different walks of life and with varying skill sets. If each educator comes to class armed and ready, then success can happen for all. When an educator is not prepared for class, then chaos reigns and learning does not happen. Our students juggle many balls; when they come to class, they want to learn. As educators, we owe it to our students to be prepared and to be ready to teach them in the best possible way. We need to maximize each learning opportunity.

This mini grant is a guide to helping you design a classroom that is effective. This is a framework for you to read and to use the information contained within to shape a classroom that works for you. It is not a manual that tells you step by step what to do; however, if each chapter is read, processed, and then utilized, the chances of success for both you and your student increases dramatically. It

is a process in which we can deepen our understanding of who we are as educators and who are students are as learners.

It may seem counter culture, but we all thrive on structure. We all like to know what we are doing and when. That does not mean that we cannot handle change when it needs to occur, but that we are adaptable. I saw a sign the other day in my travels and it read, "Plan today to be spontaneous tomorrow". I could not help but chuckle to myself. For me, my success as an educator has flowed from planning. When I am ready for class, we all soar together. When I am having an off day, well, things do not go as well as I imagined them to. I had heard the word, "edu-performer" before at an assembly at my sons' school. That resonated with me since, on a deep level, as educators, we are edu-performers. We have to come to class energized and operating on all cylinders. When we are, we can move mountains in our class. I hope that this mini grant can refuel your optimism of how a successful adult education class can be; a place where each member works together to bring about the best in each other.

We need to see the possibility in each and every one of our students. We need to engage our students' minds, values, beliefs and emotions. To be honest, we need to make the commitment to our students to be the best educators we can possibly be in whatever capacity that is. We need to be sure that our students know that we take their success very seriously.

## Introduction: The Thoughtful Classroom



As educators, we can bring about the best in our students by being thoughtful. By being thoughtful, we do the following:

- ✚ Organization, rules, procedures and structure
- ✚ Preparing students for new learning
- ✚ Build positive relationships
- ✚ Deepen and reinforce learning
- ✚ Present new learning
- ✚ Reflect on and celebrate learning
- ✚ Develop and sustain a culture of thinking and learning
- ✚ Apply learning
- ✚ Engage and enjoy

No one dimension, as they are referred to on the site, is more important than the other; rather it is a symbiotic relationship between all of the dimensions. You cannot have a thoughtful classroom if you do not have structure, yet the structure cannot be so severe that there is no enjoyment. You see what I mean...it is a flow between all components as well as seeing yourself, and your students as experts in these areas. Keep reading if this is something that you want for yourself and for your students.

The Thoughtful Classroom is designed with these key components in mind: assessment, discussion, and refining classroom practice. According to this framework, the ultimate goal is to “create a common language for talking

about what constitutes high quality teaching and how classroom practice can be improved.” (Silver and Strong Associates, 1).

The nine dimensions, which will be covered in depth in this mini grant, work together to create an environment that support teaching and learning, a must for all adult education classrooms.

The framework is divided into two key components, in which all nine are addressed separately.

The first component is a synthesis of research on instructional design and it is considered the “knowledge construction model”. (Silver Strong Associates, 1). Within this component are these key features:

- ❖ preparing students for new learning (knowledge anticipation),
- ❖ deepening learning (practicing and processing new knowledge),
- ❖ presenting new learning (knowledge acquisition),
- ❖ helping students reflect on the learning
- ❖ celebrate learning (reflecting on new knowledge)
- ❖ applying learning (knowledge application)

The second component is a synthesis of research on supporting teaching and learning and it is considered the “four cornerstones of effective teaching”. (Silver Strong and Associates,1.) Within this component are these key features:

- ❖ organization, rules, and procedures
- ❖ positive relationships
- ❖ culture of thinking and learning
- ❖ engagement and enjoyment

When these nine components come together, a thoughtful classroom is born. When a thoughtful classroom is born, gaps in education narrow or cease to exist all together. Academic progress is made. Every student engages in meaningful work across the curriculum and is able to see the connections between class work and “real life”. Every student becomes prepared in the classroom as a student, but also as an individual and as a productive citizen.

## Chapter 1:

### Who is the Adult Student?



Who is the adult student in your classroom? Do any of your students meet this description? Where do they fit in this list of “types” of students”?

- A student from Nepal learning English to improve their employment choices.
- A 17 year old who just can't make it in typical high school transfers to your adult ed diploma class and earns an “A”.
- A 53 year old man who has his high school diploma but cannot read beyond a first grade reading level and begins to take ABE classes.
- A woman from China who wants to read, write, speak and listen to English better to help her daughter succeed in school.
- A 16 year old who got bullied in day school comes to your adult high school diploma class and works hard and meets with success.
- An 18 year old who dropped out of high school due to behavior issues, returns to HiSET prep class at 27 and is determined to pass the test to “get on with my life”.
- A 53 year old woman who returned to school to earn her HiSET so she can get a promotion at work.
- A 22 year old with anxiety issues comes to class and thrives due to the low stress environment.
- A 50 year old man who owns his own business but wants to earn his high school equivalency, just because, at 50.
- An 18 year old woman who has a baby returns to adult high school to earn her English credit to graduate in June.

- An elderly woman from Sudan comes to class to learn English so she can read stories to her grandchildren.
- A 33 year old woman who is a CNA but wants to return to school to be an LPN. She begins to take Chemistry in the adult high school program.
- A 76 year old man who had on his “bucket list” to earn his high school credential.
- A family of immigrants from Pakistan who want to learn English better to make a better life for themselves.
- An 82 year old woman who comes to class to do math to ward off Alzheimer’s.
- A 16 year old who arrives to HiSET classes with a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading level and earns his HiSET along with having improved his reading level to 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
- A 23 year old woman who comes to adult ed to improve her over all skills so she can be successful in college.
- A couple from Iran comes to class to learn English together.
- A boyfriend of a HiSET prep student who comes to class to encourage his girlfriend.
- A sister of a past HiSET graduate returns to class to earn her HiSET.

Do any of your students sound like this? If so, keep reading. Adult education across New Hampshire is as varied as gumballs in a machine. You put your quarter in and you do not know what color you are going to get, but you enjoy it anyways. That is the way with adult education. Each semester brings new people to your class with new abilities and skills. It is up to the adult education center and staff to make plans, set goals, and work with the student in every way possible to make success happen; it is the collaboration between student and staff that makes success happen.

In this mini grant, you will find new ways to frame your classroom to help your student meet with success. Not every strategy will work for you and not every suggestion will either. It is a process of finding what works with your student, and for each student that means something different. It takes perseverance and fortitude to be an adult educator because it is definitely NOT one-size-fits-all, and nor should it ever be in a classroom. As Silver Strong Associates say, “the ultimate result of quality teaching is quality learning.” (4)

When we do recognize the need to be thoughtful and we recognize the needs of our students, then together we can envision and create a future with much

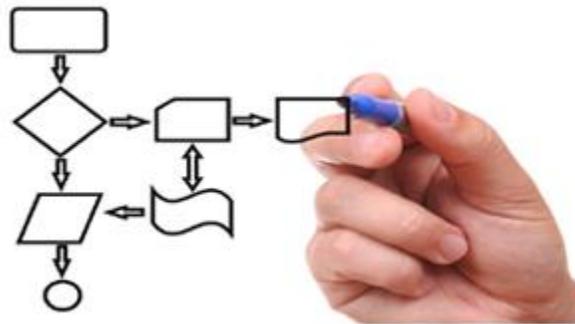
promise. It is through having high expectations, for the students, the classroom, and ourselves as educators that success will happen. (Sanchez, 12)

When our adult students leave our classrooms, they need to leave with skills that are sharp and 21<sup>st</sup> century ready. They need to have confidence, competence, and character as well as information that will allow them to make positive choices for his and her future. (Sanchez, 15)

Finally, when our students leave our adult education centers after they have accomplished their goals, they leave not only with a high school credential or sharpened skills to take on a new job or enter post-secondary education, they leave our centers ready to succeed and they have achieved high levels of motivation, confidence and self-assurance that they accomplished this major life goal and are now ready to take on the next goal.

## Chapter 2

### Organization, Rules and Procedures



**“I follow three rules: Do the right thing, do the best you can, and always show people you care.” ~Lou Holtz**

When the word “rules” is used, eye rolling usually ensues; however, when you say organization and procedures, ears perk up. We all know that it takes organization and procedures to be successful. If we just go willy-nilly, nothing gets accomplished. Having order makes a classroom a calm place. Knowing what to expect puts the learners at ease. There is something to be said about effective classroom management.

When thinking about your classroom, where do you fall? Are you organized to the max? Are you somewhere in the middle or are you “fly by the seat of your pants”?

According to Silver Strong and Associates, the first dimension is all about organization, rules and procedures. (4) Here are some key points to consider when thinking of your classroom and how it is organized, the rules you will have, and the procedures that will be followed.

When you think about how your classroom environment will be, do you think about where students will sit? Do you think about the access your students will have to resources, such as pens, pencils, rulers, art supplies, paper, and technology? When you think of all of this, do you consider safety of your students? Do you think of the class environment as one that will promote learning which will allow you to meet your overall goals and objectives?

How do you establish the way your class will run? In adult ed, it is very different from K-12 classrooms. For me, I do not have rules in my adult ed classroom. I

find it unnecessary; however, that does not mean that anything goes. I think that it is different in adult ed since most of our students have chosen to be there. For me, expectations rather than rules are the word I choose to use. It is the expectation that you will do "x", rather than it is the rule.

For some of our students in the HiSET program, they are in our classes as part of their learning plan from day school, but those students typically "rise to the occasion" when in adult ed. Setting up classroom rules might be necessary in adult high school diploma classes though. For many of our adult high school diploma students, they have not been out of traditional high school for very long. That being said, a manageable set of classroom rules needs to be established, but within those rules, procedures and communication need to be stressed. Our students need to know what the rules are, and they need to see them being modeled by all in the class. The rationale behind the rules needs to be explained and stressed, and the application of these rules needs to be put in context. The last part of rule setting is that they can be refined at any time; this is probably the most important part of rule setting. If it is not working, refine it and start again.

Once the class environment has been structured, it is time to get busy with the actual class content. Before a lesson is given, do you give thought as to how you will provide the directions to the class, to the lecture that you will give, to the steps of the assignment? If not, now is the time to start to think about how you will do that. The agreed about method by research is to use a variety of modalities, which includes verbal (what you can hear), visual (what you can see), and physical demonstration (what you can do with your body). If this is done, they you meet the needs of every student without having to signal anyone out. When you do this, you meet the needs of all learners; but, this is not the end point.

Once you have plotted out the steps to the course that you will follow for that class, you MUST check for understanding. You can never assume that each student in your class understands what was just said or what is expected. Checking for understanding is simple, and it prevents you having to do a lot of work to fix the issues that may arise from lack of understanding.

Lastly, the flow of activities in the class needs to move at just the right pace. That is the area that is the most difficult to manage. How do you know if you are going too fast? Too slow? Just right? How do you know when you have struck the balance between lecture and activities? How do you know that you are

meeting the needs of all of your students? That is when experience comes in handy. The longer you work in adult ed the better you are at gauging this and it comes with time and practice. Learning how to “read” your students will come and once that is part of your class time routine, the easier it is for this last step.

As a closing thought, before each class, take the time to do the following:

- ❖ Take a deep breath and compose yourself
- ❖ Smile and enjoy your students
- ❖ Stay calm
- ❖ Take your time. Don't rush lessons. Move on when your students are ready.
- ❖ Be specific. Tell your students what you expect. Model what you want to see.
- ❖ Don't react-respond.

<http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2010/01/30/your-daily-checklist-for-effective-classroom-management/>

According to research conducted by the Thoughtful Classroom, if these dimensions are followed in your class, students will: show respect for each other and the classroom. They will understand the classroom rules and procedures and follow them. They will make good use of their time, will know how and when to be self-directed, will take responsibility of their own learning, and will have a positive attitude. They will become independent learners and they will know how to self-regulate their learning. What teacher would not want this? What student would not want this of themselves?

## 50 Things You *Don't* Have To Do for Classroom Management

1. You don't have to lecture, yell, or scold.
2. You don't have to micromanage.
3. You don't have to ignore misbehavior.
4. You don't have to be unlikable.
5. You don't have to tolerate call-outs and interruptions.
6. You don't have to use bribery.
7. You don't have to walk on eggshells around difficult students.
8. You don't have to give false praise.
9. You don't have to send students to the office.
10. You don't have to implore your students to pay attention.
11. You don't have to say things you don't truly believe.
12. You don't have to be humorless, stern, or overly serious.
13. You don't have to repeat yourself over and over again.
14. You don't have to *work* on building community.
15. You don't have to beg or coax or convince your students into behaving.
16. You don't have to waste time and attention on difficult students.
17. You don't have to *do* more or say more to have better control.
18. You don't have to show anger or lose your cool.
19. You don't have to lower your behavior standards.
20. You don't have to talk so much, so often, or so loud.
21. You don't have to have an antagonistic or demanding relationship with difficult students.

22. You don't have to shush your students or ask repeatedly for quiet.
23. You don't have to give frequent reminders and exhortations.
24. You don't have to show hurt or disappointment to get your message across.
25. You don't have to guide, direct, or handhold your students through every moment of the day.
26. You don't have to be thought of as a "mean" teacher.
27. You don't have to use threats or intimidation to get students to behave.
28. You don't have to have friction or resentment between you and any of your students.
29. You don't have to use behavior contracts to turn around difficult students.
30. You don't have to give over-the-top or gratuitous praise.
31. You don't have to plead with your students to follow your directions.
32. You don't have to use different strategies for different students.
33. You don't have to tolerate a noisy, chaotic, or unruly classroom.
34. You don't have to talk over your students or move on until you're ready.
35. You don't have to accept being disrespected, cursed at, or ignored.
36. You don't have use complicated classroom management methods.
37. You don't have to be fearful of holding your students strictly accountable.
38. You don't have to hold time-consuming community circles or hashing-out sessions.
39. You don't have to be negative or critical to motivate your students.
40. You don't have to cover up your personality or hold back from having fun.
41. You don't have to tolerate arguing and talking back.
42. You don't have to ask two or three times or more for your students' attention.

43. You don't have to offer praise for *expected* behavior.
44. You don't have to rely on parents, the principal, or anyone else to turn around difficult students.
45. You don't have to be overbearing or suffocating to have excellent control.
46. You don't have to give incessant talking-tos to difficult and disrespectful students.
47. You don't have to ask students *why* they misbehaved or force assurances from them.
48. You don't have to have a boring, no-fun classroom to keep a lid on whole-class misbehavior.
49. You don't have to be tense, tired, and sick of dealing with misbehavior.
50. You never, ever have to be at the mercy of your students.

<http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2012/03/03/50-things-you-dont-have-to-do-for-effective-classroom-management/>



Students who are unfamiliar with a lesson may be required to complete tasks on the lower levels: remembering and understanding. Students with some mastery may be asked to apply and analyze the content, and students who have high levels of mastery may be asked to complete tasks in the areas of evaluating and creating.

Examples of differentiating activities:

- Match vocabulary words to definitions.
- Read a passage of text and answer related questions.
- Think of a situation that happened to a character in the story and a different outcome.
- Differentiate fact from opinion in the story.
- Identify an author's position and provide evidence to support this viewpoint.
- Create a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the lesson.

## **2. Process**

Each student has a preferred learning style, and successful differentiation includes delivering the material to each style: visual, auditory and kinesthetic and through words. Not all students require the same amount of support from the teacher, and students could choose to work in pairs, small groups or individually. While some students may benefit from one-on-one interaction with a teacher or classroom aide, others may be able to progress by themselves. Teachers can enhance student learning by offering support based on individual needs.

Examples of differentiating the process:

- Provide textbooks for visual and word learners.
- Allow auditory learners to listen to audio books.
- Give kinesthetic learners the opportunity to complete an interactive assignment online.

## **3. Product**

The product is what the student creates at the end of the lesson to demonstrate the mastery of the content. This can be in the form of tests, projects, reports or other activities. Teachers may assign students to complete activities that show mastery of an educational concept in a way the student prefers, based on learning style.

Examples of differentiating the end product:

- Read and write learners write a book report.
- Visual learners create a graphic organizer of the story.
- Auditory learners give an oral report.
- Kinesthetic learners build a diorama illustrating the story.

#### **4. Learning environment**

The conditions for optimal learning include both physical and psychological elements. A flexible classroom layout is key, incorporating various types of furniture and arrangements to support both individual and group work. Psychologically speaking, teachers should use classroom management techniques that support a safe and supportive learning environment.

Examples of differentiating the environment:

- Break some students into reading groups to discuss the assignment.
- Allow students to read individually if preferred.
- Research shows differentiated instruction is effective for high-ability students as well as students with mild to severe disabilities.
- When students are given more options on how they can learn material, they take on more responsibility for their own learning.
- Students appear to be more engaged in learning, and there are reportedly fewer discipline problems in classrooms where teachers provide differentiated lessons.
- Differentiated instruction requires more work during lesson planning, and many teachers struggle to find the extra time in their schedule.
- The learning curve can be steep and some schools lack professional development resources.

Because of the success built into a class that is differentiated, we lay the foundation for positive relationship building in the class. According to this dimension within the Thoughtful Classroom, (7), teachers are to engage the student at so many different levels- the higher the engagement, the higher the rate of positive relationships. When you begin to think about positive relationships, key words ought to come to mind: care, commitment, student interests, student choice, student centered, student goals, different ways of teaching, mutual respect, support, collaboration, discussion, positive interactions, and open and appropriate communication.

According to Francisca Sanchez, the author of, “**Interactive Classroom Strategies and Structures for Success**”, she states that classroom needs to

promote belonging, community, self-determination, self-awareness, responsiveness, responsibility, trust, empathy, generosity, dignity, respect for self and others, intrinsic motivation, curiosity, competence, decision making skills, and problem solving skills.

If all of these words can be encapsulated within the class, success for all can be had. To think about these words in context, think of these key words like this. When you think of your class, do you think that you are a team, or that each part is separate? Do you think of yourself as a car where all the pieces need to be functioning at top performance and as that no one piece is more important than the other? Do you stop to ask students what they are interested in and try to add that into the curriculum? Do you try to stay current with the latest music, movies, video games, sports teams and so on to engage the students where they are at? Once you had done that, do you actually talk to your students? Do you get to know them in an appropriate way? (This is a bit tricky since you want to show you care, but you do need to maintain boundaries and a level of professionalism with your students.)

Your students need to know that they are individuals first. Do you assess your students in different ways so they can demonstrate what it is that they know, rather than highlighting for you what they do not? Do you allow students to work collaboratively on projects so they get to know one another? Through these group projects, do student engage in high levels of collaboration, discussion and interaction? Once students get to know each other, the level of engagement rises due to their increased comfort in class.

According to the research conducted by the Thoughtful Classroom, if these dimensions are followed in your class, then students will: be respectful of each other and you and they will be willing to collaborate with each other. They will participate in whole class and small group discussions and they will have the feeling that it is a joint effort and that everyone is working together to bring about success. They will display empathy and they will share their feelings appropriately and they will learn how to resolve conflicts appropriately and they will have a voice in the class as well as out in the “real world”.

## Four Corners



Distribute a pen and sheet of paper for each player. Each person divides the sheet into four boxes/squares either by folding the paper in half twice (vertically and horizontally) or simply by drawing a horizontal and vertical line that crosses in the middle.

For each square, each person will describe themselves in the form of drawings. Choose these four topics in advance. For example, in the top left square, everyone could draw "favorite hobbies," while in the top right, people could illustrate "favorite place on earth for vacation," the bottom left could be something like "if you were an animal, which one would you be?" and the bottom right could be something like "what are the most important things in your life?" Feel free to be as creative, hypothetical, or deep as you like.

Allow five to ten minutes to draw. When everyone is finished, gather them together and share the drawings as a group. This icebreaker is an excellent way for students to show-and-tell what makes them unique!

<http://www.icebreakers.ws/small-group/four-corners.html>

## Fabulous Flags



Fabulous Flags, which is also known as the Personal Flags Activity, is a useful icebreaker activity to help people convey what represents them or what is important to them. Each person draws a flag that contains some symbols or objects that symbolizes who they are or what they enjoy.

This get-to-know-you activity is best done indoors. Any number of people can participate. Materials required are several sheets of paper, pens, and colored pencils/crayons/markers.

### Instructions for Fabulous Flags Activity

Pass out a sheet of paper, pens, and colored pencils, crayons, and/or markers to each person. Explain the activity: "We're now going to draw flags that represent or symbolize us. Please design your own flag of you – include some symbols or objects that symbolize who you are or what you find enjoyable or important." You can show your own sample flag if you like. For example, you could draw:

- a guitar (representing your passion for music)
- a tennis racket (someone who enjoys sports)
- a country like India (representing your affiliation with a country)

Give everyone a set amount of time to draw, for example, 15-20 minutes or so, and then reconvene as a group. Ask for volunteers to share their flags and explain the meaning of what they drew. If it is a large group, you can divide everyone into smaller groups and ask them to share their flags with each other, or you can just ask a small number of volunteers to share.

### Variations

After everyone has finished sharing the individual flags, as a big group you can ask everyone to brainstorm ideas on what to draw for a large class-wide flag. Proceed to delegate individuals to draw certain parts of the class-wide flag. Alternatively, you can collect the individual flags and paste them onto a board to create a "quilt" of individual flags, representing unity.

<http://www.icebreakers.ws/get-to-know-you/fabulous-flags.html>

## Communication/Feedback



To begin this ice breaker, you as the facilitator, are to draw a picture of a stick man. Keep it hidden from your audience until later. Make certain everyone has something to write on. Explain you are going to have them draw something by following your verbal directions. They cannot ask questions.

Instruct them as follows:

1. Draw a small circle near the top of the page.
2. Now draw a vertical line from the circle to the middle of the page.
3. Now draw two lines from the circle angled down toward the middle of the page.
4. Now draw two lines separating from the single vertical line each of which angles down toward the bottom of the page.
5. At the end of the angled lines stemming from the circle, draw five small lines.
6. At the end of the angled lines stemming from the vertical line, draw an oval at the base of each line.

Now show the picture you constructed and ask them to compare. Naturally, participants will make the point that had they had the opportunity to ask questions, or had they been provided more information, such as a diagram, they would have done better. The point of this ice breaker is to show that using more than one means of communicating is better than a simple one-way method.

[http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&sqj=2&ved=0CFkQFjAF&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cprs.org%2Fmembersonly%2FPlayful\\_Activities\\_that\\_Pay\\_Off.doc&ei=K8LaUbDkBZLJ4APXoYCIAQ&usg=AFQjCNEhKnZ1zhARNtko\\_hkw5oTSXuezyw&sig2=IzKoFh0DjndChVIZCjOEHQ&bvm=bv.48705608,d.dmg](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&sqj=2&ved=0CFkQFjAF&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cprs.org%2Fmembersonly%2FPlayful_Activities_that_Pay_Off.doc&ei=K8LaUbDkBZLJ4APXoYCIAQ&usg=AFQjCNEhKnZ1zhARNtko_hkw5oTSXuezyw&sig2=IzKoFh0DjndChVIZCjOEHQ&bvm=bv.48705608,d.dmg)

## Who Could Have Done That?



For this ice breaker, you will need a set of note cards and pens.

Distribute a pen and paper to each of the participants.

Ask each of the group members to write a line about him or herself. Some examples might be, "I cannot cook" or "I have never been to the Niagara Falls" or "I hate exercising" can be written based on which the other members have to guess the person who has written that.

Ask the people to write a fact that most of the other participants do not know.

The guesswork is sure to create laughter and prove to be an excellent way to break the ice.

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/icebreaker-games-for-office-staff-meetings.html>

## Chapter 4

### Engagement and Enjoyment

**Life is a journey,  
with problems  
to solve,  
lessons to learn,  
but most of all,  
experiences to  
enjoy.**

Engagement and enjoyment must be facets of your class. This dimension is based on student engagement, an engaging classroom, and motivational factors that influence a student's level of commitment in the classroom. According to Silver Strong and Associates, in this dimension educators are to instill joy and pleasure into their class and into the curriculum. (9)

According to this dimension within the Thoughtful Classroom, (9), educators need to reignite passion for learning. Educators need to bring back the joy of learning and the pleasure that is associated with learning something new. The task of a teacher in this dimension is to inspire "passion for learning" and to develop the "capacity for the classroom to surprise and delight students."

This is a daunting task! How do we as educators increase a student's drive for success, increase their curiosity, seek out originality, and work on relationship building? How do we "tap into the power of 'self-hood'", (10) which means encouraging student to pursue their own interests, make their own choice, develop their own perspectives, and express their values and dreams? How do we as teachers create a classroom environment that has the elements of surprise, delight, humor, novelty, color and movement?

In discovering ways to keep things "fresh", we learn new ways to keep students motivated, on-task and learning. We want to keep our students wanting more. Our classrooms ought to be like TV or movies that are cliffhanger based...we want to know what happens next and we want to tune into the next episode to

find out what happens next. For adult students, part of this process is through motivational drivers such as controversy, choice, and competition. When our students see that our classroom is challenging and that there is something new to be learned each class, why would they not come? “Learning is a social process in which students grow into their intellectual life.” (Sanchez, 27). If learning is social, then our classrooms need to lend themselves to make these opportunities.

Classrooms need to be based in inquiry. When students inquire, they are curious, they are engaged, and they make observations in which they reflect on. When a classroom is based in inquiry, there is thinking and asking questions, information is looked at critically, answers are analyzed and results are communicated. (Sanchez, 45).

According to the research conducted by the Thoughtful Classroom, if these dimensions are followed in your class, then students will: be energetic and enthusiastic. They will display effort and they will enjoy themselves in the classroom and they will express their own self-interests, their ideas and their insights. Lastly, students who are in a classroom that is focused on the dynamic will be on-task and motivated. They will be engaged in the learning process and they will see how powerful it is to be a learner.

## **14 Activities to Engage Students in Learning**

### **1. Pretest with a Partner**

Pair students up for the pretest, then have them use the same set of materials for that pretest. If it is on the computer, simply have them share a computer between the two of them. During the pretest walk around the room so you can gauge your students' needs and adjust the lesson accordingly. Make sure that the pretest is very similar to the posttest so you can see how much was actually retained during the direct instruction.

### **2. Stand Up Sit Down**

Teachers can use this to help students differentiate between any two categories. For instance, when a teacher is trying to help her students distinguish between common nouns and proper nouns, she would give an example then instruct them to either stand up if it is a common noun or sit down if it is a proper noun. This is a great way to see how much of your class is actually grasping the material. It's also a great way to get your students' blood flowing to keep them alert and engaged.

### **3. Thumbs Up Thumbs Down**

Instruct students to put their thumbs up if they agree or put their thumbs down if they disagree. It is a very quick way to see how students are doing. However, when students have a low energy level (i.e. right after lunch) Stand Up Sit Down may be a better alternative. On the other hand, if you need to maintain your students' current energy level Thumbs Up Thumbs Down is ideal.

### **4. Secret Answer**

This activity is ideal for students that might not be as confident in their answers. These students are the ones that if you were doing Stand Up Sit Down or Thumbs Up Thumbs Down as a class, they would be looking around the room to see what other students' answers are before they would answer it themselves. To do the exercise properly, have your students place their hand near their heart (physically) and hold up the appropriate number of fingers depending on what their answer is. This way, especially if all the students are facing the teacher, it is difficult for students to copy their neighbor's answer.

## **5. Response Cards**

This is another great way to get your students involved during class time. You can use Response Cards for any number of responses, including: agree/disagree, true/false, yes/no, greater than/less than, multiple choice, and emotions.

## **6. Think-Pair-Share**

This activity is a great way for students to be able to pause and process what they have just learned. Ask the class a question that they must first consider by themselves then give them the opportunity to discuss it with their neighbor. Once they've discussed the question, students are then invited to share their answers with the class. By giving them this time, you are enabling them to be more engaged in their learning.

## **7. Quick Writes**

Studies show that the proper ratio of direct instruction to reflection time for students is ten to two. That means that for every ten minutes of instruction teachers need to provide students with two minutes for reflection. This activity is a great way to provide students with that much needed reflection time! In this activity, the teacher asks a question about a topic or concept that has just been taught. Then the student produces a written response and either shares it with a neighbor or is invited to share it with the entire class.

## **8. One Word Splash**

Although this activity is one that most teachers are pretty much unfamiliar with, it's a very effective way to help students process what they've already learned. After explaining new material, ask your students to write down one word to sum up that material. Now, you might think that writing down one word is overly simplistic but it actually requires higher processing skills that will help your students digest their learning. This can be done either with a pencil and paper or a dry erase marker and personal whiteboard for each student.

## **9. Quick Draw**

This activity is great, especially for visual learners or students that are not quite writing yet. After learning a new concept or topic, have your students draw a picture about what they've just learned.

## **10. Gallery Walk**

This activity will keep your students engaged and their energy level high. After having your students write or draw their responses, and have a Gallery Walk, (walk around the room like in a museum to view the responses) and allow your students to look around the room and see other students' responses. Because students seek approval from their peers they will put more effort into the exercise.

## **11. A-Z Topic Summary**

End of lesson responses are a great way to engage your students and help them connect the dots on their own. This can be used either as individuals or in pairs. If it is an individual activity, have students write either a word or a sentence having to do with the lesson for each letter of the alphabet. If A-Z topic is used in pairs, assign a letter to each pair and have them write a sentence rather than have them do the whole alphabet.

## **12. 3-2-1**

This activity is very quick so it is perfect when you are pressed for time but still need to give your students a chance to process the material. First you will have them write three facts they learned about the topic. Next, two questions they still have about the topic that might not have been covered in class. Finally, have your students write one opinion they have about the material.

## **13. Find Your Match**

Hand out one card to each student in the class and then have them get up and find the other student with the matching card. You can do this with many topics including: antonyms/synonyms, words/definitions, problem/solution. This is especially effective when doing math problems and solutions.

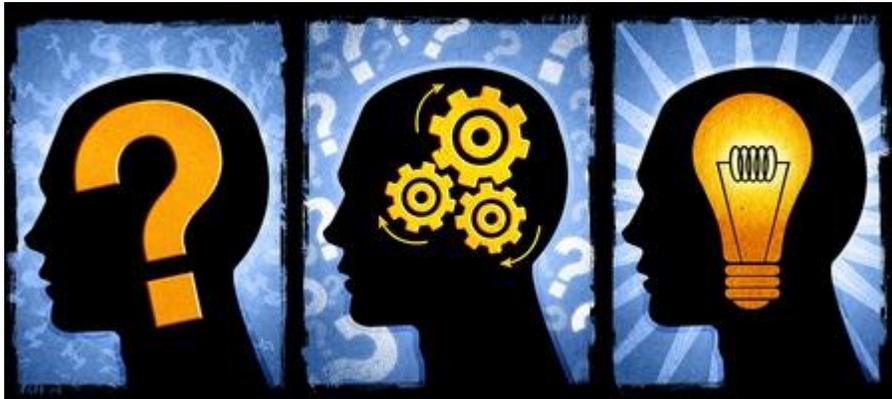
## **14. Dictation**

Dictation is highly effective in engaging students because it is multisensory— involving: auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactile senses. Having a multisensory approach increases working memory and integrates all language skills/modalities. To do Dictation have students listen to a word, repeat the word out loud, write it out on paper, and then have them read the word out loud again.

[http://www.readinghorizons.com/blog/14-classroom-activities-that-increase-student-engagement?\\_\\_r=8d2c3a56434050d](http://www.readinghorizons.com/blog/14-classroom-activities-that-increase-student-engagement?__r=8d2c3a56434050d)

## Chapter 5

### A Culture of Thinking and Learning



**“The ultimate aim of education is to enable individuals to become the architects of their own educations and through that process to continually reinvent themselves...In this sense, the curriculum is ...a mind altering device.”**

**~Elliot W. Eisner**

This dimension is about culture of thinking and learning as well as classroom culture. According to Silver Strong and Associates, who quote Charlotte Danielson (2007) from her book, ***Enhancing Professional Practice***, (67) “classrooms without a culture for learning are characterized by an atmosphere where no one, teacher or students, cares about the content to be learned...On the other hand, classrooms with a culture for learning are cognitively busy places. Students have clearly accepted the notion that important outcomes can be achieved only by hard work, and they invest energy in their activities and assignments, persevering to overcome temporary setbacks”.

In this dimension, there is an emphasis on thinking. Our students need to think. They need to make connections among the various topics and they need to experience the learning in many different ways. Students need to be in control of their learning and they need to grapple with ideas and concepts and form their own conclusions. They need to get annoyed with problems to find alternative ways to solve them. If it is annoying enough, they will work hard at finding a solution. What pride they will feel when they have accomplished this as well.

Educators need to take on the role of facilitator, not omnipotent rulers of the class. “Learning is conscious knowledge gained through teaching...it involves

attaining, along with the matter being taught." (Sanchez, 27). Students need to see themselves as possessing the power to learn a rigorous curriculum that utilizes strategies and also thinking and learning tools. Educators need to strike a balance between facilitation, direct instruction, and coaching, which involves feedback and support. If an educator does this balance act well, then the classroom becomes student-centered rather than teacher-driven.

According to Rebecca Alber in her article, "How Student Centered is Your Classroom?" she asks the reader to consider these questions to reflect on the learning environment that is designed for students:

- In what ways do students feel respected, feel valued, and feel part of the whole group?
- In what ways do students have ownership of the classroom? Do they ever make decisions about resources, environment, or use of time? When? How often?
- Do they have ownership in their learning? Do they have choices and options for projects, assignments, and partners for group work?
- When are students comfortable with expressing who they are and their thoughts and ideas? When are they not?
- When do you inquire about the needs of your students? How often do you do this? How often do you check for group understanding and adjust the instruction accordingly?
- How are desks arranged? Are students facing each other? Do they have multiple opportunities each week to share with fellow classmates, and to share with a variety of classmates?
- As the instructor, what is my "air time" each class session? How much direct instruction is there? How might I change some of that directing teaching to facilitating?

<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/how-student-centered-your-classroom-rebecca-alber>

So, how do educators go about fostering a culture of thinking and learning? According to this dimension within the Thoughtful Classroom, (13), to begin, an educator must challenge students' minds with rigorous texts and content by employing critical thinking skills and higher-order thinking challenges such as inquiry, investigation, problem-based learning and action research projects. Engaging class projects need to be the norm, and homework, if you assign it, should be highly engaging and it should make students question and delve deep to find answers.

Students need to have modeled for them persistence of learning. Educators need to show students how to review. Thinking slowly and carefully about key points needs to be demonstrated, and most importantly, students need to learn how to pay attention to their own thinking so they can start to see how what they are learning in class pertains to other classes and topics as well as to the world at large. This needs to be tempered with strategies so they may build their skills.

Students need to learn how to ask questions as well as to delve deeper into their learning. Educators have to clarify student responses and allow for quiet time so they can process their learning. Educators need to learn when to talk and when to keep quiet. Keeping quiet is difficult because we are educators, we want to explain; yet sometimes, it is best to keep quiet. A minute of silence can bring about ten minutes of rich discussion.

The use of graphic organizers helps to solidify what is presented in a visual way. Graphic organizers are designed to focus attention on key elements, integrate prior knowledge with new knowledge, enhance concept development, enrich all facets of learning, promote focused discussion, assist in planning and goal setting and also serve as an assessment and evaluation tool. (Sanchez, 35).

Some types of graphic organizers that might be helpful to your students are:

- ❖ hierarchical (main concept, ranks, classifications)
- ❖ conceptual (category, supporting facts, description, compare/contrast and problem/solution)
- ❖ sequential (chronological order, specific beginning/end, cause and effect),
- ❖ cyclical (continuous sequence and cycle). (Sanchez, 35).

(Please see the Resource Section of this mini grant for examples of graphic organizers.)

Whenever possible, bridge the class with technology so that students can begin to see technology as a tool for critical thinking, creative expression and problem solving. Technology is firmly embedded in all parts of life. The classroom needs to embrace technology and students need to learn how to balance technology with the demands of the classroom as well as the real world.

According to the research conducted by the Thoughtful Classroom, if these dimensions are followed in your class, then students will: use different forms of

thinking and show curiosity. Students will use thinking and learning strategies, which will support their thinking with evidence. They will learn, and then want, to inquire and investigate. Students will ponder and imagine different scenarios to problem solving. Asking meaningful questions will occur and they will challenge themselves when the opportunity arises and they will figure out solutions to problems. Students will embrace technology in meaningful ways to help them solve problems. They will come to see themselves as problem solvers.

## Chapter 6

### Preparing Students for New Learning (Knowledge Anticipation)



Students need to be prepared for new learning, or knowledge anticipation. This dimension concerns itself with students needing to build their knowledge. According to Silver Strong and Associates, in this dimension students will “call up what they already know about the topic of the unit and connect that background knowledge to the content to come”. (15)

In this phase of learning, educators introduce the topic, the key questions, the key concepts, expectations of the unit of study, discuss the outcomes for the unit of study and then assess the learning in different ways to guarantee that the material was learned.

Try these activities for firing up students' minds and tapping into prior knowledge:

**Image Brainstorm.** Project an image on the LCD projector or Smart board and ask students to tell you everything they can about the picture. Choose images that make sense to them and also allow you to connect to the new content and/or concepts students will be learning.

**K-W-L Chart.** This is a tried and true, technique, but be careful not to overuse. The “K” stands for “what do you know”. The “L” stands for “what do you want to learn” and the “L” stands for “what did you learn”?. Be mindful that it does not work with all subjects and it can be an overused activity for assessing prior knowledge. Research says, “use it sparingly and when you do, use it dynamically.”

**Picture Books.** No matter the age, they work like magic. If there is a concept or skill you are about to introduce, find a children's book that's

related in some way and that your students may be familiar with. Read it aloud and watch the bells go off.

**ABC Brainstorming.** On one sheet of paper students make a box for every letter of the alphabet and then (they can do it in pairs) brainstorm a word or phrase that starts with each letter.

**Class Brainstorm Web.** Free-for-all, classroom fun I like to call it. After writing a word or phrase in a circle (whiteboard, poster paper) have students write as many words connected to it that they can think of around it. Keep the web visible throughout upcoming lessons and refer to it as you explore photosynthesis in-depth, even asking them to add words and facts to it.

**Anticipation Guide.** The teacher writes a number of statements to elicit a response to a topic. Students write an initial response to the topic and then discuss responses in small groups or in class. Students then listen to a lecture, watch a film, have a debate, or complete a reading. Afterwards, students write a response indicating why their opinions changed or were strengthened.

**Brainstorming.** Getting preliminary thoughts and ideas down in print or electronic form (e.g., in a Concept Map, web diagram, list) can bring thoughtful expressions of ideas into view for students. Some organization and clustering can be accomplished from an initial set of ideas. Many teachers are moving this task to students, and are using software aids (e.g., Inspiration®) as a way to help students organize ideas.

**Clustering (Word Webbing, Word Splash).** Clustering helps students to survey subjects and to see the connections between various associations. Students write a “nucleus word” or draw a central image in the center of a sheet of paper and record all the words and/or sketch all the images that come to mind around the nucleus. At that point, circle each word as it is placed on the page and draw a line to the item to which it most closely relates. Examine the cluster for closely related words or images that could form the topic for a unit, or allow for discussion of a concept

**LINK (List–Inquire–Note–Know).** The teacher puts a concept or question on the board or overhead. Students write down their thoughts and ideas. In the class discussion that follows, students ask questions of each other

while the teacher notes responses (e.g., on a Concept Map). Information is concealed and students write down what they remember (e.g., recreate Concept Map). Students then note what they have learned and what they need to know or learn.

**Listen–Draw–Pair–Share.** Students draw and label a diagram illustrating what they know about a topic. They share and compare their drawing with another student and then with the class. The teacher presents new information, such as an assigned reading, a lecture, or a film, and students alter, adapt, or redo their drawings. Students share their “before” and “after” drawings, discussing changes and differences.

**Picture Puzzle.** The teacher finds a picture (photograph, drawing, diagram) in which the subject is not obvious or is unfamiliar to students. Students discuss what the picture could possibly represent.

**Rotational Cooperative Graffiti.** A Rotational Cooperative Graffiti activity is often used as a group brainstorming strategy to expose and examine students’ prior knowledge (under very limited time frames) of a topic, an idea, an issue, or a science concept. It is particularly entertaining and useful when the class is making a transition to a new component of the curriculum. One way to keep the enthusiasm elevated is to have groups rotate large sheets of paper upon which the ideas have been sketched out. The brainstormed ideas can exist as “paint splashes” (random positioning on the page), organized into lists, or drawn as pictures or cartoons. The strategy may be adapted as purposes require.

<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/prior-knowledge-tapping-into-often-classroom-rebecca-alber>

At the end of the learning of the content, time is to be taken to make connections to what students learned and how that impacts their life as well as how the topic connects to other areas of study. The brain naturally constructs meaning when it perceives relationships and those meaningful connections motivate the brain to be engaged and focused. (Sanchez, 27).

According to this dimension within the Thoughtful Classroom, (16), educators must begin this dimension by assessing what students already know about the topic, what their skill levels are, and what their interests are in relation to this topic. To go even deeper, teachers can ask students how this topic of study

relates to any personal goals they might have. “Knowledge is actively constructed by the learners on a base of prior knowledge, attitudes and values which are shaped by personal experience and the social and cultural environment.” (Sanchez, 27).

Once background knowledge is assessed, educators then need to begin the lesson with a hook—a thought provoking activity or question that will capture student interest and make them want to listen closely to the content that is being presented. (This hook should help to activate background knowledge as well.)

Educators may need to explain vocabulary and key concepts to keep the learning alive. A student cannot master content if they do not understand the key words. At any point during the lesson, encourage students to ask questions. The more questions that are asked, the deeper the learning because students will then be invested in the learning since they are looking for answers to their questions.

Depending upon your role in adult ed may drive the next part of this dimension. Students need to develop insight into what they are producing. They need to know prior to beginning a task what it is that they are being asked to produce. This will be the area that they need to focus their energy on when attending to the task at hand. This is the part of this dimension that will require of them high quality work, which can be attained through the use of check lists and rubrics. When students know what it is that they need to do to accomplish the set task, the higher the likelihood it will happen if they know what it is that they need to do. In this area of producing a product, short term and long term goals needs to be established. When there is an end in sight, it is much easier to continue to do work than no periodic check-ins.

According to the research conducted by the Thoughtful Classroom, if these dimensions are followed in your class, then students will: be able to activate their prior knowledge which will lead to understanding of the content. They will be able to set goals and then as the unit of learning progresses they will restate goals in their own words. They will ask questions pertaining to their goals and they will know exactly what it is that they need to produce as well as what the expectations are. Students will be able to assess their own knowledge because they will have learned the vocabulary necessary for this topic of study. Most importantly, the students will learn how to make a plan for learning.

## Chapter 7

### Presenting New Learning (Knowledge Acquisition)



This dimension's focus is on presenting new learning or knowledge acquisition. This dimension concerns itself with figuring out where learning comes from. For me, learning comes from anywhere...a film, a lecture, a text, a lab, a demonstration, internet research or articles and of course, a combination of all of the above. Learning also comes from the students seated right in front of you. Our students have a wealth of knowledge. It may not be from formal education, but their experiences are tremendous sources of information for the topics presented in class.

Acquiring knowledge requires “tools and strategies for accessing, collecting, organizing, and comprehending new information”. (18) According to Silver Strong and Associates, in this dimension educators need to ask the following questions, “where will the information come from” and also, “what kinds of note making tools, visual organizers, and inquiry techniques will my students use to make sense of this new information?”

According to this dimension within the Thoughtful Classroom, (19), educators must design lessons around the way content is organized and then it needs to be presented in manageable chunks. As always, the curriculum must be challenging and rigorous, but it must be manageable. Students must be able to see the big ideas as well as the details that support these ideas. Students must be challenged, but it needs to be balanced with support, whatever structure that may take.

Our students can be supported by learning how to take good notes, by being able to summarize effectively, by using graphic organizers to help them keep

information organized and sorted, as well as to help them figure out the best way to keep the information organized.

When presenting this new information, it is best if it is presented in multiple ways. Students need to see the same topic presented in different ways to reinforce the new learning. When educators use visuals, drama, stories, imagery and so on, they make the lessons come alive. The learning is not just a page in a book but a vivid depiction of what is happening in the lesson. If it is vivid, it is memorable. For me, I want a lesson that will have my students talking about it long after they have left the class.

We all know about different modalities of learning, but did you know that there were seven? According to the Institute for Learning Styles, ([www.learningstyles.org](http://www.learningstyles.org)) a person learns best when there is repeated exposure through many different pathways. The longer the exposure, the deeper the learning. When we learn, we take in information into short term memory. As experiences increase, the learning then goes into long term memory. How many of these learning styles do you use?

**Print Modality - A Print Oriented Learner: a learner who refers to seeing printed or written words.**

- Often takes notes
- May like to write on the whiteboard
- Remembers quickly and easily what is read
- Learns better after seeing or writing something
- Is often perceived as a “bookworm”
- Grasps important concepts on first reading of material
- Loves to read books, journals, magazines

**Aural Learner - An Aural Learner: a learner who refers to listening.**

- Tends to remember and repeat ideas that are verbally presented
- Learns well through lectures
- Is an excellent listener
- Can reproduce symbols, letters or words by hearing them
- Likes to talk
- Enjoys plays dialogues, dramas
- Can learn concepts by listening to tapes
- Enjoys music
- Can repeat or fulfill verbal instructions

**Visual Modality - A Visual Learner: a learner who refers to visual depictions such as graphs.**

- Learns by seeing and by watching demonstrations
- Likes visual stimuli such as pictures, slides, graphs, demonstrations, etc.
- Conjures up the image of a form by seeing it in the "mind's eye"
- Often has a vivid imagination
- Often stares
- Needs something to watch
- Is often quiet and does not talk at length
- Becomes impatient or drifts away when extensive listening is required
- Prefers the visual arts and media

**Haptic Modality - The Haptic Learner: a learner who refers to the sense of touch or grasp.**

- Likes a "hands-on" approach to learning
- Involves the sense of touch in learning
- Likes to do artwork
- Likes to piece things together
- May be fond of doodling
- Likes to trace words and pictures
- Is often seen "fiddling" with something
- Is successful with tasks requiring manipulation

**Interactive Modality - The Interactive Learner: a learner who refers to verbalization.**

- Learns best through verbalization
- Often hums or talks to self or others
- Usually is not quiet for great lengths of time
- Often talks at length...just to hear him/herself talk!
- Likes to use other people as a sounding board
- Enjoys question/answer sessions
- Finds small group discussions stimulating and informative
- Prefers to discuss things with others

**Kinesthetic Modality - The Kinesthetic Learner: a learner who refers to whole body movement.**

- Learns by doing, direct involvement

- Often fidgets or finds reasons to move
- Is not very attentive to visual or auditory presentations
- Wants to be “doing” something
- Tries things out and likes to manipulate objects
- Gestures when speaking
- Is often a poor listener
- Responds to music by physical movement
- Often finds success in physical response activities
- Learns better when able to move during learning
- Likes to move hands (doodling, tapping,) while learning
- Uses movement to help concentrate

**Olfactory Modality - *The Olfactory Learner*: a learner who refers to the sense of smell or taste.**

- Learns best through the sense of smell and taste
- Smells have a special significance
- Associates a particular smell with specific past memories
- Is frequently able to identify smells
- Finds that smells add to learning

Classroom learning should continue well after the class has ended. As learning is happening, educators need to be using a variety of response techniques to ensure that students understand the content. Educators have to model for students how they tackle new learning. The more students see how good learners learn, the more than can incorporate those practices into their own life.

While learning is occurring, make it as authentic as possible. The more students can see what they are learning in class has a direct connection to their own lives, the more interested and invested they become. According to Steve Wheeler on his blog, “blogspot”, ([steve-wheeler.blogspot.com](http://steve-wheeler.blogspot.com)) he states that authentic learning needs to have its place in 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms. He states that authentic learning has to have the following components:

1. **Real-world relevance:** Activities match as nearly as possible the real-world tasks of professionals in practice rather than decontextualized or classroom-based tasks.
2. **Ill-defined:** Activities require students to define the tasks and sub-tasks needed to complete the activity.
3. **Complex, sustained tasks:** Activities are completed in days, weeks, and months rather than minutes or hours. They require significant investment of time and intellectual resources.

4. **Multiple perspectives:** Provides the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives using a variety of resources, and separate relevant from irrelevant information.
5. **Collaborative:** Collaboration is integral and required for task completion.
6. **Value laden:** Provide the opportunity to reflect and involve students' beliefs and values.
7. **Interdisciplinary:** Activities encourage interdisciplinary perspectives and enable learners to play diverse roles and build expertise that is applicable beyond a single well-defined field or domain.
8. **Authentically assessed:** Assessment is seamlessly integrated with learning in a manner that reflects how quality is judged in the real world.
9. **Authentic products:** Authentic activities create polished products valuable in their own right rather than as preparation for something else.
10. **Multiple possible outcomes:** Activities allow a range and diversity of outcomes open to multiple solutions of an original nature, rather than a single correct response obtained by the application of predefined rules and procedures.

One way to look at presenting new learning, or knowledge acquisition, is to look at learning as a process through which our students go “into, through, and beyond”. (Sanchez, 42). “Into” is meant to be that teachers will identify and organize students' prior knowledge related to the topic. Then they will use the students' prior knowledge to connect them to the new topic.” “Through” is meant to provide students with access to key requisite content, engage the students in meaningful ways, and provide opportunities for a range of activities to explore the topic and learn the key concepts. “Beyond” is meant to have teachers extend the ideas presented in the lessons, engage students in reflection and then to debrief the learning process. (Sanchez, 42).

According to the research conducted by the Thoughtful Classroom, if these dimensions are followed in your class, then students will: actively process new content. When this happens, they are able to identify the big ideas and the key concepts in their learning. After they identify the big ideas and supporting details, they are able to communicate what it is that they have learned. Communicating about learning means being able to ask questions and find answers to these questions. Learning, processing, communicating, and questioning-all this leads to summarizing what has been learned and then, ultimately, this entire process leads to connections to the real world.

## Chapter 8

### Deepening Learning (Practicing and Processing New Knowledge)



This dimension's focus is on deepening learning or practicing and processing new knowledge and this dimension has two distinct parts, but they each serve to deepen students' knowledge. The two parts are practice and guided practice followed by declarative knowledge.

Practice is the procedural side of learning. It is the skills and procedures that students need to master during the unit of study. During the practice phase, educators employ different strategies to help students develop a solid skill base. Once that happens, guided practice takes over and within guided practice, teachers and students work together with feedback to foster independence in using the strategies that were taught, modeled, and used on an independent basis in and out of the classroom.

Declarative knowledge is information. In this dimension, students need to make meaning of the learning. They need to turn it into knowledge that they own and that they are ready to apply. In this phase, students go from a superficial to a deep understanding of the content. This deepening of knowledge can occur through discussion and debate, questioning, using analysis and creative thinking. (Silver Strong and Associates, 21).

According to this dimension within the Thoughtful Classroom, (22), educators are to provide opportunities to process new knowledge through questions so that the learning is deep. Deep learning can occur through the use of questions, which will lead to rich discussions and critical and creative thinking opportunities. Questions help educators bridge the gap between the learning that needs to take place and student thinking. Productive questions can help learners: focus their attention on significant details, events, and processes, become more precise while making observations, analyze, classify, categorize and evaluate, make predictions, plan responses to dilemmas and construct ideas that make sense to them. (Sanchez, 37).

One questioning technique that meets with great success is the Question Formulation Technique, or QFT which was created by the Right Question Institute of Boston. ([www.RightQuestion.org](http://www.RightQuestion.org))

QFT gets to the heart of questioning. Here are the steps involved.

The **purpose** of using QFT™ with your students is: to get students to ask their own questions, which in turn creates students who are invested in their learning and who see a purpose to their learning since there is a direct connection to the lesson and to what they want to learn. When students are allowed to ask their own questions, they become empowered.

The **uses** of QFT™ range from brainstorming, to writing an essay, to engaging in a debate or thoughtful class discussion, as well as deepening of math and science concepts. QFT™ can be used at the beginning, middle and end of a unit of learning. When using QFT™, students are more engaged, they learn more, and they feel confident in their ability.

QFT™ is a simple yet effective and powerful process in which there is a direct outcome to student learning. Here is what you do:

1. Use a **Focus** or **Questions Focus (Q Focus)** to ask questions about. The Q Focus can be generated by the teacher or the students. IT MUST BE A STATEMENT, PICTURE, or SIMPLE MATH PROBLEM. The Q Focus is to be presented without any additional information, and is to be introduced with a minimum of words. **Examples** of Q Focus are: “Winning the lottery can produce negative consequences”. Use with Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery”, when working with fiction. “Filling out job applications correctly is a must”. Use with students when beginning to work on informational text.

“Staying physically fit requires exercising regularly, eating healthy foods, and sleeping enough”. Use with students when beginning to work on an essay. “ $A=L \times W$ ”. Use with students when introducing this math formula. “Conducting a science experiment will lead scientists to answers”. Use with students when beginning a science lesson geared towards the scientific method. “The Constitution is the “law of the land”. Use with students when beginning a lesson on the Constitution and what it means in the United States.

2. **Produce Your Questions.** There are 4 essential rules for producing your own questions:
  - a. Ask as many questions as you can.
  - b. Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer the questions.
  - c. Write down every question exactly as it is stated.
  - d. Change any statement into a question.
3. **Improve Your Questions.** Categorize the questions as closed or open-ended.
  - a. Closed-ended questions: can be answered with “yes”, “no”, or with one word.
  - b. Open-ended questions: they require an explanation and cannot be answered with “yes” or “no” or with one word.
  - c. Find closed-ended questions. Mark them with a “c”. The other questions must be open-ended. Mark them with an “o”.
  - d. Name the value of each type of question: advantages and disadvantages of both open-ended and closed-ended questions.
  - e. Change 3 open-ended questions to closed, and 3 closed-ended to open.
4. **Prioritize Your Questions.** Choose your three most important questions. Why did you choose these questions? Where are they situated on your list? What does this mean?
5. **Implement Next Steps.** How are you going to use your questions? Will you write a paper, research a topic, engage in a debate, solve a math problem, work on the scientific method with the new found knowledge, or begin a lecture?
6. **Reflect.** What did you learn? How can you use what you have learned?

### **Time Breakdown for using QFT™:**

Rules: 3 minutes

Produce Questions: 7 minutes

Closed and Open-ended questions: 5 minutes

Prioritize Questions: 5 minutes

Next Steps: 2 minutes

Reflection: 3 minutes

\*Keep the time limits to keep students focused. As students become more adept at this process, time limits can be modified.

### **Caveats in using QFT™**

- Validate all responses and contributions equally.
- Respond to student generated questions with “thank you”.
- Encourage students to be equal participants in the process, but do not force students to talk. Allow them to think and then participate.
- Students need to know the purpose of what they are doing this process for.
- Allow for wait time.
- Allow for quiet.

Educators need to know their learners in this dimension. They need to be able to identify “critical junctures in the learning sequence” (Silver Strong and Associates, 22) and targets need to be established. These targets are necessary for student growth. These targets have to be mastered before moving on to the next target area. Within this dimension, periodic review and guided practice is built in so students can develop mastery of the new learning.

While the learning is happening, group work is a key element in this dimension. Grouping should be both homogeneous and heterogeneous to maximize student learning. (When doing grouping, be sure to group using different methods so that the group design maximizes learning.)

According to Alex Quigley, on his website, “Hunting English”, (<http://www.huntingenglish.com/2013/01/12/top-ten-group-work-strategies/>) there are key activities that an educator can do to foster group work. His ideas are easily incorporated into any class. Some of his ideas are:

**Think-pair-square:** this is a twist on “think, pair, share”. In this strategy, you are linking two pairs together which will form the ‘square’ to share their ideas before whole class feedback.

**Snowballing:** the snowballing activity is another simple but very effective way of building upon ideas by starting with small groups and expanding the groups in a structured way. As the metaphor of the snowball suggests, you can begin with an individual response to a question; followed by then pairing up students up; then creating a four and so on. It does allow for quick, flexible group work that doesn’t necessarily require much planning, but does keep shaping viewpoints and challenging ‘answers’ in a constructive fashion.

**Debating (using clear rules):** when doing debates, ground rules need to be established before beginning. There needs to be a clear structure and there needs to be a level of formality as well. A debate will not work if there is no coherence or if the end result does not produce greater clarity.

**Project Based Learning/Problem Based Learning:** the principles of Project Based Learning are key: such as identifying real audiences and purposes for student work (a key factor in enhancing motivation); promoting interdependent student work, often subtly guided by the teacher at most stages; letting students undertake roles and manage the attendant challenges that arise; learning is most often integrated and spans subject areas; and students constructing their own questions and knowledge.

**Group Presentations:** the basis of any group presentation is creating a product in which there has been a “culture of inquiry”. In group presentations, students need to define their topic, research their project, work as a team, budget their time, and knowing clearly who is responsible for what part of the project. Students working as a group have a shared responsibility and understanding of what the end result will be and how they want to get there.

**Devise the Display, Working Wall or Learning Continuum:** there is high quality learning that takes place when the display, working wall, or learning continuum is updated constantly by students. This is one method of formative assessment that is a great visual tool for the class. When doing one of these methods, students are constantly planning, devising, and creating their newest thoughts. Students have to prioritize what is important to the learning process at that time.

**Talking Triads:** this is a strategy that gets students to explore a chosen topic, but with a really rigorous analysis of ideas and views. The triad comprises of a **speaker**, a **questioner** and a **recorder/analyst**. Questions can be prepared beforehand, or the **questioner** and the **analyst** can prepare questions while the **speaker** prepares or reflects upon potential answers. This can be done in front of the class as a gallery of sorts, or you can have all triads working simultaneously. If they do work simultaneously, then a nice addition is to raise your hand next to a particular triad, which signals for other groups to stop and listen whilst that specific triad continues, allowing for some quality listening opportunities.

**Mastery Modeling:** this involves a form of formative assessment from students, whereat the teacher gives a group a series of models, both exemplar models and lesser models, including some with common errors that students would likely identify. The students need to do a critical appraisal of these models as a group and identify their summary assessment of the models first, before then devising and presenting a 'mastery model' that is a composite exemplar model of work. This presentation should include an explicit focus upon the steps taken leading to create the '*mastery model*' during the feedback – this unveils the process required for mastery for the whole class.

Alex Quigley listed Socratic Talk as one of his strategies. His description was not as detailed as I would have liked. Here is a more detailed accounting of the Socratic Talk. In Socratic Talk, there is a predictable set of relationships that hold for all subjects and disciplines. This is given in the general logic of reasoning, since every subject has been developed by those who had:

- shared goals and objectives (which defined the subject focus)
- shared questions and problems (whose solution they pursued)
- shared information and data (which they used as an empirical basis)
- shared modes of interpreting or judging that information
- shared specialized concepts and ideas (which they used to help them organize their data)
- shared key assumptions (that gave them a basis from which to collectively begin)
- a shared point of view (which enabled them to pursue common goals from a common framework)

Each of the elements represents a dimension into which one can delve in questioning a person. We can question goals and purposes. We can probe into the nature of the question, problem, or issue that is on the floor. We can inquire into whether or not we have relevant data and information. We can consider alternative interpretations of the data and information. We can analyze key concepts and ideas. We can question assumptions being made. We can ask students to trace out the implications and consequences of what they are

saying. We can consider alternative points of view. All of these, and more, are the proper focus of the Socratic questioner.

As a tactic and approach, Socratic questioning is a highly disciplined process. The Socratic questioner acts as the logical equivalent of the inner critical voice which the mind develops when it develops critical thinking abilities. The contributions from the members of the class are like so many thoughts in the mind. All of the thoughts must be dealt with and they must be dealt with carefully and fairly. By following up all answers with further questions, and by selecting questions which advance the discussion, the Socratic questioner forces the class to think in a disciplined, intellectually responsible manner, while yet continually aiding the students by posing facilitating questions.

A Socratic questioner should:

- a)** keep the discussion focused
- b)** keep the discussion intellectually responsible
- c)** stimulate the discussion with probing questions
- d)** periodically summarize what has and what has not been dealt with and/or resolved
- e)** draw as many students as possible into the discussion.

<http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/socratic-teaching/606>

Whenever possible, use a wide variety of resources, such as manipulatives, models, learning centers, and multimedia to enhance the learning as well as to provide practice. Practice makes permanent.

In this dimension, formative assessments are used to help students see the progress they are making towards their individual learning goals. Assessment should be: on going, dynamic and interactive, designed to improve learning, multi-perspective, based on observation and analysis, and designed to demonstrate what our learners know. (Sanchez, 52). According to Global Digital Citizen Foundation, (<https://globaldigitalcitizen.org/12-awesome-formative-assessment-examples>), "formative assessment tools used in the classroom provide critical feedback to teachers, helping them to monitor and modify their instruction methods and lesson plans. Teachers are better able to meet the unique needs of individual students, empowering them through personalized and timely feedback." Here are a few creative ways to discover what your students know.

**Postcards from the Past:** have students adopt the personality of a historical figure and write a postcard to another historical figure from the same era, discussing a significant event that has just occurred.

**Collage or Poster:** ask students to make a collage or poster from magazine photos to demonstrate understanding of a concept.

**Journal:** students periodically record their thoughts and feelings about how they are progressing in the class. They can also share feelings about particular assignments or indicate areas in which they may be experiencing difficulties in the classroom, either with the material, the teacher, or their classmates.

**Doodle:** challenge students to use a drawing rather than words to show understanding of a concept.

**Caption Photos:** choose three photos that represent a process. Ask students to caption each photo.

**Metacognition Table:** at the end of class, each student answers the following questions presented to them on index cards:

- What did we do in class?
- Why did we do it?
- What did I learn today?
- How can I apply it?
- What questions do I have about it?

**Four Corners:** this is a great way to encourage dynamic movement while learning multiple-choice questions. Designate each corner of the classroom to represent A, B, C, and D. Students go to the corner that they believe corresponds with the correct answer.

**Vote with Thumbs:** ask the class if they understand a concept. A thumbs up is “yes”, thumbs down is “no,” and “not sure,” is thumbs middle.

**Stop & Go Cards:** students create index cards with a large green marker circle on one side and red on the other. If they are following along and understanding the lesson, the green side of their card is upright and visible to you. When they do not understand something and need clarification, they flip the card to show you the red side.

**Twitter Board:** students summarize what was learned in a lesson using 140 characters. Pin small strips of paper to a poster or corkboard to resemble a Twitter feed.

**Roll the Die:** each student gets a die. At the end of class, each student rolls and briefly answers aloud a question based on the number rolled:

1. I want to remember ...
2. Something I learned today
3. One word to sum up what I learned
4. Something I already knew
5. I'm still confused about ...
6. An "aha" moment that I had today

**Enthusiasm and Learning Formative Assessment Example Chart:** students rank what they learned that day and how much they enjoyed the lessons. They then elaborate on a Post-It, offering details about what they found helpful to them in having a successful learning day. They can also share what prevented them from having a fulfilling day. Compile the data and discuss it in class the next day.

Once the formative assessments are given, it is a must that clear and descriptive feedback is given and it must be given in a timely manner. This feedback is used to deepen learning, revisit learning strategies as well as refining practice to deepen comprehension. Did you know that there are many ways to give feedback? Here are 20 easy ways to do so.

### **1. Feedback should be educative in nature.**

Providing feedback means giving students an explanation of what they are doing correctly AND incorrectly. However, the focus of the feedback should be based essentially on what the students is doing right. It is most productive to a student's learning when they are provided with an explanation and example as to what is accurate and inaccurate about their work. Use the concept of a "feedback sandwich" to guide your feedback: Compliment, Correct, Compliment.

### **2. Feedback should be given in a timely manner.**

When feedback is given immediately after showing proof of learning, the student responds positively and remembers the experience about what is being learned in a confident manner. If we wait too long to give feedback, the moment is lost and the student might not connect the feedback with the action.

### **3. Be sensitive to the individual needs of the student.**

It is vital that we take into consideration each student individually when giving feedback. Our classrooms are full of diverse learners. Some students need to be nudged to achieve at a higher level and other needs to be handled very gently so as not to discourage learning and damage self-esteem. A balance between not wanting to hurt a student's feelings and providing proper encouragement is essential.

### **4. Ask the 4 questions.**

Studies of effective teaching and learning (Dinham, 2002, 2007a; 2007b) have shown that learners want to know where they stand in regards to their work. Providing answers to the following four questions on a regular basis will help provide quality feedback. These four questions are also helpful when providing feedback to parents:

- What can the student do?
- What can't the student do?
- How does the student's work compare with that of others?
- How can the student do better?

### **5. Feedback should reference a skill or specific knowledge.**

This is when rubrics become a useful tool. A rubric is an instrument to communicate expectations for an assignment. Effective rubrics provide students with very specific information about their performance, comparative to an established range of standards. For younger students, try highlighting rubric items that the student is meeting or try using a sticker chart.

### **6. Give feedback to keep students "on target" for achievement.**

Regular 'check-ins' with students lets them know where they stand in the classroom and with you. Utilize the '4 questions' to guide your feedback.

### **7. Host a one-on-one conference.**

Providing a one-on-one meeting with a student is one of the most effective means of providing feedback. The student will look forward to having the attention and allows the opportunity to ask necessary questions. A one-on-one conference should be generally optimistic, as this will encourage the student to look forward to the next meeting. As with all aspects of teaching, this strategy requires good time management. Try meeting with a student while the other

students are working independently. Time the meetings so that they last no longer than 10 minutes.

### **8. Feedback can be given verbally, non-verbally or in written form.**

Be sure to keep your frowns in check. It is imperative that we examine our non-verbal cues. Facial expressions and gestures are also means of delivering feedback.

### **9. Concentrate on one ability.**

It makes a far greater impact on the student when only one skill is critiqued versus the entire paper being the focus of everything that is wrong.

### **10. Alternate due dates for your students/classes.**

Utilize this strategy when grading papers or tests. This strategy allows you the necessary time to provide quality, written feedback. This can also include using a rotation chart for students to conference with at a deeper more meaningful level. Students will also know when it is their turn to meet with you and are more likely to bring questions of their own to the conference.

### **11. Educate students on how to give feedback to each other.**

Model for students what appropriate feedback looks like and sounds like. Train students to give each other constructive feedback in a way that is positive and helpful. Encourage students to use post-it notes to record the given feedback.

### **12. Ask another adult to give feedback.**

### **13. Have the student take notes.**

During a conference over a test, paper or a general 'check in', have the student do the writing while you do the talking. The student can use a notebook to jot down notes as you provide the verbal feedback.

### **14. Use a notebook to keep track of student progress.**

Keep a section of a notebook for each student. Write daily or weekly, dated comments about each student as necessary. Keep track of good questions the student asks, behavior issues, areas for improvement, test scores etc.

### **15. Return tests, papers or comment cards at the beginning of class.**

Returning papers and tests at the beginning of class, rather than at the end, allows students to ask necessary questions and to hold a relevant discussion.

### **16. Use Post-It notes.**

Sometimes seeing a comment written out is more effective than just hearing it aloud. During independent work time, try writing feedback comments on a post-it note. Place the note on the student's desk the feedback is meant for.

### **17. Give genuine praise.**

Students are quick to figure out which teachers use meaningless praise to win approval. If you are constantly telling your students "Good Job" or "Nice Work" then, over time, these words become meaningless. Comments and suggestions within genuine feedback should also be 'focused, practical and based on an assessment of what the student can do and is capable of achieving' (Dinham).

### **18. "I noticed...."**

Make an effort to notice a student's behavior or effort at a task. For example; "I noticed when you regrouped correctly in the hundreds column, you got the problem right." "I noticed you arrived on time to class this entire week." Acknowledging a student and the efforts they are making goes a long way to positively influence academic performance.

### **19. Provide a model or example.**

Communicate with your students the purpose for an assessment and/or feedback. Demonstrate to students what you are looking for by giving them an example of what an A+ paper looks like. Provide a contrast of what a C- paper looks like. This is especially important at the upper learning levels.

### **20. Invite students to give YOU feedback.**

Why not let students give you feedback on how you are doing as a teacher? Make it so that they can do it anonymously. What did they like about your class? What didn't they like? If they were teaching the class, what would they do differently? What did they learn the most from you as a teacher? If we are open to it, we will quickly learn a few things about ourselves as educators. Remember that feedback goes both ways and as teachers it is wise to never stop improving and honing our skills as teachers. <http://www.teachthought.com/learning/20-ways-to-provide-effective-feedback-for-learning/>

According to the research conducted by the Thoughtful Classroom, if these dimensions are followed in your class, then students will: be able to distinguish between what they know, do not know, and what they need to work on. Students will learn how important it is to practice and to rehearse. Thinking strategies will be used and become automatic. Effort will be visible. Students will learn how to think critically and to synthesize their learning, discuss their ideas, give explanations and make new hypotheses in their learning. Learning will come alive. Students will learn how to be “coaches” in the class and to use this new found skill to use and give feedback. Feedback will have been used with them so they will know possess that skill to see and hear feedback to assess and modify their performance.

## Chapter 9

### Applying Learning (Knowledge Application)



In this dimension, the focus is on applying learning or knowledge application. This dimension is all about creating a product that demonstrates what they have learned. This is the dimension in which summative assessment occurs as well as self-assessment and planning.

In the planning and self-assessment phase, students need to ask themselves a few questions. They need to ask themselves, “What do I need to know?” “What do I need to be able to do?” “What does success look like and how will I achieve it?” According to Silver Strong and Associates, in this dimension, students benefit greatly if they are able to see products that are top notch.

According to this dimension within the Thoughtful Classroom, (24), educators need to equip students with planning skills as well as self-assessment skills that they will need to analyze and address task demands. Before work begins, educators need to review content and skills to make sure that students understand what is expected of them. This is the time to use rubrics, check lists and to show exemplars of past products. Educators at this point need to have different means of assessing what students have learned and providing them various opportunities and ways to do so.

Culminating assessments need to allow for students to show how they can transfer the learning from the class to real world learning and it needs to be

demonstrated in meaningful ways. Whatever form summative assessments take, they must be aligned with learning goals and targets. These summative assessments must capture student interest and have relevance to the world beyond the classroom.

Summative assessments can take three different forms: classroom-based, school-based or portfolios. Classroom-based assessments can be divided into 3 forms: self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher assessment. Self-assessment includes reflection and rubrics. Peer assessment includes observation, rubric, and dialogues. Teacher assessments include observation, reflection, curriculum-embedded, performance-based, rubrics and exams.

Portfolios incorporate all three aspects and they are designed to showcase students' best work, as well as to chronicle growth over time. Portfolios can include: audio tapes, video tapes, journal entries, projects, books, peer evaluations, rubrics, inventories, graphic organizers, Power Point, Prezi, brainstorming charts, self-evaluations, teacher observations and narratives. (Sanchez, 52).

Lastly, feedback must be given while students work on these summative assessments so that they can refine their final products and produce quality work. Feedback needs to be given in all aspects of class. Our students need to hear what they are doing right and where they need to improve their skills.

According to the research conducted by the Thoughtful Classroom, if these dimensions are followed in your class, then students will: plan out their work. They will analyze and revise their own work to improve its quality. While students are working independently, they will use rubrics and checklists to develop meaningful products. Because of our use of feedback, they will be able to incorporate feedback into their revisions to produce quality work that they take pride in. If all this occurs, students will be able to present and explain their work.



Students need to reflect on their own learning process to identify what they did well and where they would like to improve.

Students need to learn how to review learning goals and targets and assess their level of achievement. They need to learn how to make their goals more manageable and figure out ways to meet goals when they did not get accomplished. When goals are met, teachers need to meet with students to help them set new goals. A goal must always be place so that students continue to aspire to learn. When a goal is met, it has to be celebrated.

According to the research conducted by the Thoughtful Classroom, if these dimensions are followed in your class, then students will: take a step back and see the big picture. They will learn how to ask questions and find answers to them. They will talk about their learning process and how they figured out the solutions to their problems. Students will learn about the content and then find ways to talk about it. Because of this, they will be able to make meaningful connections as well as generalizations. When these steps are taken, students will be able to look back on their learning goals and assess their effort and achievement. They will be able to see that they made strides in their goals because they put forth the effort and they will be able to set new goals based on the success of their past goals. With this new skill set, they will be able to compare their performance with previous performances to help bring about success.

## Chapter 11

### Conclusion



As an educator, we have many demands placed on us, and we do not have much time to stop and reflect on our own practice. For a thoughtful classroom to come to fruition, we must take time to look at our own commitment to learning and what we do to reinvigorate ourselves. We cannot be at our highest standard if we do not take the time to learn about who we are as learners and what we need to do to continue to hone our craft.

To be the best educator we can possibly be, we must hold ourselves to high professional standards. When we can do this, we become responsible to high levels of curriculum, rigorous outcomes for our students and collaboration with colleagues to bring out the best in ourselves.

We need to commit to self-assessment and growth as individuals and teachers. We need to continue to develop our skills so that we can set the bar high for our students and self since we pride ourselves in being lifelong learners.

A commitment to being the best we can possibly be can bring about change. When we are thoughtful about who we are and what we stand for, this ripples into our classroom. Professionalism is at the heart of teaching and if we can be professional we can be all that we need to be and all that we need to do to make our classrooms thoughtful. If we do that, they we are partly responsible for thoughtful students-they are part of this dynamic too. Working together, great things can happen in and out of the classroom.

## Resources:

**Authentic Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.** A 12 page pdf. discussing how educators need to address learning.

<https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI3009.pdf>

**Graphic Organizers** from Education Place, a site developed by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. These are the graphic organizers that can be found at this site.

- [Clock](#)
- [Cluster/Word Web 1](#)
- [Cluster/Word Web 2](#)
- [Cluster/Word Web 3](#)
- [Describing Wheel](#)
- [E-Chart](#)
- [Fact and Opinion](#)
- [Five W's Chart](#)
- [Flow Chart](#)
- [Four-Column Chart](#)
- [Garden Gate](#)
- [Goal-Reasons Web](#)
- [Ice-Cream Cone](#)
- [Idea Rake](#)
- [Idea Wheel](#)
- [Inverted Triangle](#)
- [ISP Chart](#)
- [\(Information, Sources, Page\)](#)
- [KWL Chart](#)
- [KWS Chart](#)
- [Ladder](#)
- [Observation Chart](#)
- [Persuasion Map](#)
- [Planning Chart](#)
- [Problem-Solution Chart](#)
- [Sandwich](#)
- [Sense Chart](#)
- [Sequence Chart](#)
- [Spider Map](#)
- [Step-by-Step Chart](#)
- [Story Map 1](#)
- [Story Map 2](#)
- [Story Map 3](#)
- [T-Chart](#)
- [Ticktacktoe](#)
- [Time Line](#)
- [Time-Order Chart](#)
- [Tree Chart](#)

<https://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>

**Key Element for Effective Classroom Management.** This is a 13 page pdf. document that covers the following areas: learning environment, activities, instructional strategies and projects, schedules, transitions, rules and procedures,

student communication, personal independence and competence, motivation, behavior, staff roles and responsibilities, and documentation.

[www.pent.ca.gov/pos/cl/keyelementsclassroomchecklist\\_gc.pdf](http://www.pent.ca.gov/pos/cl/keyelementsclassroomchecklist_gc.pdf)

**Strategies for Activating Prior Knowledge.** This is a 26 page pdf. that contains nineteen activities for activating prior knowledge.

[www.classhelp.info/.../Strategies%20for%20Activating%20Prior%20Kno...](http://www.classhelp.info/.../Strategies%20for%20Activating%20Prior%20Kno...)

**12 Interesting Ways to Start Class Tomorrow.**

<http://www.teachthought.com/teaching/12-interesting-ways-to-start-class-tomorrow/>

**30 Activities for Student Engagement in 30 Minutes or Less**

[www.asainstitute.org/.../19-30ActiveEngagementActivities-in-30-Minute...](http://www.asainstitute.org/.../19-30ActiveEngagementActivities-in-30-Minute...)

**56 examples of Formative Assessment.**

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/pub?id=1nzhdnyMQmio5INT75ITB45rHyLI..>

**101 Ways for Teachers to be More Creative.**

<http://www.teachthought.com/teaching/101-ways-for-teachers-to-be-more-creative/>

**Socratic Circles.** A 6 page pdf on how to do a Socratic Circle.

<http://www.huntingenglish.com/2013/01/12/top-ten-group-work-strategies/>

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<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/how-student-centered-your-classroom-rebecca-alber>