SOME BEST TEACHING PRACTICES

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General Teaching Methods Class
June 3, 2010
Teacher Education Institute
INTRODUCTION

• Overview of some “best practices”

• Some ideas taken from:
  “10 Best Teaching Practices”
  by Donna Walker Tilleston
SAFE & ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT

Characteristics of a SAFE environment:

- Sense of belonging
- Sense of empowerment
- Advocate for every student
- Resiliency in students
SAFE & ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT

- Characteristics of an ENRICHED environment:
  - High level of support for achievement
  - More ways for students to discover information
  - Challenges
  - Feedback
    - Every 30 minutes
    - Various ways
    - From various sources
Use a variety of teaching strategies--address various learning styles

- There are three basic learning modalities:
  - Auditory
  - Visual
  - Kinesthetic
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MODALITIES

- Allow students to use **all three** modalities
- Give **new information** in the first 20 minutes of class
- Give opportunities to **process information**
THE RHYTHM OF TEACHING

Teach 15-20 minutes for secondary students*
Teach 12-15 minutes for elementary students*

*Reduce teaching time for younger students

Activities using the new information
Discussion using the new information or review of information
Guided practice
A PICTURE IS WORTH 1,000 WORDS—VISUAL LEARNERS

- If five people shake hands with each other, how many handshakes is that?

- How can you visually represent this problem?
Kinesthetic learners

- How would you help a kinesthetic learner solve the handshake problem?
Making Connections

- This is what the brain does with new information...

- Old learning
  
  TRANSFER
  
  - New learning
    - (Is it useful?)
TRANSFER

- Positive Transfer
  - When past learning CONNECTS to the new learning

- Negative Transfer
  - When past learning INTERFERES with new learning
WHAT AFFECTS TRANSFER?

- What connections does the student see?
- What is the same about this new topic?
- What are the most important parts of this new learning?
- How is this new learning unique or different?
- How does this new learning fit?
WHAT DOES THIS QUOTE MEAN TO YOU?

“ The brain thrives on meaning, not random information.”

- Eric Jenson (1998)
SOME STRATEGIES

- **K=** what I already **know**; **W=** what I **want** to know; **L=** what I **learned**. (K-W-L)

- **Patterns**
  - Point out what is the same
  - Point out what is unique

- Examine a subject from many different perspectives
TEACHING FOR LONG-TERM MEMORY

- Working memory capacity

  - Preschooler
    - 5-10 min./2 chunks of info.

  - Pre-adolescent
    - 5-10 min./3-7 chunks of info.

  - Adolescent/adult
    - 10-20 min./7-9 chunks of info.
TYPES OF MEMORY

- Semantic
- Episodic
- Procedural
- Automatic
- Emotional
TYPES OF MEMORY

FIGURE 4.1. The Brain's Retrieval System
HELPING SEMANTIC MEMORY

- Make learning relevant
  - Modeling
  - Giving examples
  - Mnemonic devices

- Show students PATTERNS
HELPING EPISODIC MEMORY

• Ask: “Where were we when we learned this?”

• Use colors to link and to separate learning

• Use unusual props to help students remember
HELPING PROCEDURAL MEMORY

- Students practice the expected behavior
- Use hands-on activities, role play, manipulatives, physical skills
- Repeat a behavior for 28 days, becomes internal (Covey)
HELPING AUTOMATED/CONDITIONED RESPONSE

- Once we learn something it becomes automatic

- Mnemonic devices help students learn boring material
HELPING EMOTIONAL MEMORY

• Strong emotions carry the most meaning

• Enthusiasm, drama, role-playing, quiz shows, music, debates, larger projects, guest speakers, creative controversy, adventures, impactful rituals and celebrations.
Do you remember?

- Name the 5 types of memory
Communication is important

- **Teacher to students**
  - No threat
  - Positive atmosphere
  - Clear expectations (no surprises!)
  - Set benchmarks and check for understanding
  - Teacher knows what is going on in the classroom
  - Teacher = coach, leader, guide
COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT

- Student to student (group work)
  - Start small --pairs--short time
  - Start with familiar material
  - Make the work meaningful
  - Stick to time schedule
  - Tell students why you are working in groups
COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT

- With parents
  - Keep parents informed about child’s progress.
  - Letters, notes, e-mail, phone calls, parent conferences, group meetings
COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT

- With other staff members
  - Integrate learning by working with other teachers
  - Get administrative support for working in teams
  - Maintain a positive attitude
ALL LEARNERS

- Need a safe and enriched environment
- Benefit from different ways of learning
- Benefit from reflecting on their learning
- Need to make choices