



Contents

About PAILAL	1
Our First issue!	1
Did you know?	1
Active learning starts with the Teacher	2
Active learning starts with the Teacher con't	3
Curriculum webs for reaching learners	3
Curriculum webs for reaching learners Con't	4

◆ Did you know?

Proper hydration can increase retention of information? Encourage the regular consumption of fresh water in your classroom!

About PAILAL

By Timothy C. Clapper, M.A.]

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide useful information for education professionals and parents regarding the improper labeling of active learners that is occurring in epidemic proportions.

The Dunn and Dunn Model of 1978 suggest that learners possess three styles of learning including, auditory, visual, and tactile / kinesthetic.

Unfortunately, many educators are stuck in a rut and are using the same instructional strategies that center on traditional delivery methods such as lecture-based instruction.

Imagine learning with your ears closed shut or your eyes taped shut. How difficult would it be for you to learn the lesson that was being delivered? Well, that is a feeling that active learners know all too well. Active learners need to move about and become a part of the lesson and are often bored sitting still and doing nothing. Such boredom may

cause the learners to act out and be disruptive in the classroom.

Often enough, a phone call to the parent seeks a conference in which the educator informs the parent that the learner is acting out and fails to follow the teacher's instruction. The parent who may be unfamiliar with active learning needs may seek additional assistance or be referred by the educator to counselors and medical personnel eager to prescribe medications for one of many hyperactivity labels.

PAILAL is not about denying the existence of ADD/ADHD. Instead, we hope to share active learning information and classroom strategies so that perhaps greater learning and less labeling will occur.

Sources

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Our First Issue!!

This newsletter is PAILAL's first and long overdue.

To make this newsletter successful we would like to hear from you with suggestions for content.

If you are using a technique that relates to active learning strategies in your classroom, we would like to hear it. You can help to spread good ideas and make learning a positive experience for all.

We would also appreciate your articles. For those choosing to submit articles please list sources and give credit where

it belongs. Also, provide contact information to aid others who wish additional information.]

Active learning starts with the Teacher

By Lauren Hoffman



“Setting up the environment for active learning is vital.”

It can seem overwhelming when trying to plan lessons that accommodate all the students in a classroom whom may vary considerably in learning styles. To successfully teach to the active learners in a classroom a few simple strategies are offered which may lead to a smoother school year. Whether it is in an early childhood classroom setting or an elementary school setting, setting up the environment for active learning is vital. Accommodating all the students starts with the teacher.

Active learners need to be able to feel what they are doing, play with what they are doing, and investigate what they are doing. Some elementary schools have centers that are *by the book* leaving no room for the child to explore and create. The children may walk into restrictive centers with page-long directions and worksheets to fill out. In reality this is the same principle as sitting at a desk and doing worksheets. Centers need to be interactive, diverse, and have rules that are flexible enough to prevent chaos but inspire learning.

Clearly labeled centers and materials around the classroom allow for easy transition to the cleanup time after the lesson. Direct representation of materials on the shelves makes cleanup time less confusing and less frustrating for the teacher and students. Labeling also gives students a sense of confidence in their initiative by knowing where everything they need is located (Johnson & Roopnarine, 2005).

Another strategy to use in the classroom is incorporating both small group and large group activities. This helps children build their social skills as well as interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. This strategy also allows students to master independent as well as cooperative work.

Combining these skills along with integrating new ones make planning lessons for active learners easier the more they are practiced. Every teacher has the ability to create a user-friendly active learning environment.

Here is a great activity which may be used for reviewing prior to a vocabulary test. Print out each of the vocabulary words and their definitions. Cut them into individual rectangles. Purchase a big beach ball and inflate it. Paste or tape the definitions around the ball in a random order. Then tape the words around the ball, making sure that the definitions and words are not right next to each other. Take the students outside or into a large open area and set up a few simple rules. Here are the rules that I used when I taught this lesson to a third grade honors class.

Rule number 1: your right pointer finger is the magic finger. Wherever that finger lands on the ball when you catch it you are to read the word aloud and then define it, or read the definition and then say the word.

Rule number 2: to the class: if you agree with that person’s response, wiggle around in place (demonstrate to the students how to wiggle or jump up and down, spin around, etc.) If you disagree, raise your hand and wait until you are called upon to challenge the answer.

Rule number 3: If the magic finger keeps landing on the same word or definition, switch the magic finger to the left pointer finger.

It is important to remember to keep the rules simple, make it feel like a game not a review, and to let the kids be silly, have fun, and move around. One may be able to see how the learner may be learning while at the same time being able to move about in unrestricted learning. This strategy may help to reinforce material, help children respond well, retain information, do well on tests, and remember the information after the test is over.

Active learning starts with the Teacher con't

Lauren Hoffman is a student at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania. She is a dual major in Early Childhood Development and Elementary Education. She is sure to make a positive difference in many little lives. Her email address is MissLaurenFaye@aol.com

The vocabulary words and terms can be substituted with mathematic equations, writing prompts for journals along with social studies and science themes. The possibilities are endless and fun. Who has to sit at a desk all day?

Sources

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Curriculum webs for reaching learners

By Timothy C. Clapper, M.A.

Active learning may be more critical today than ever. Generation Y learners have grown up using new technologies including using digital photos, presentation software, streaming video and web conferencing tools which educators can use to engage students and extend learning beyond textbooks (Adams, 2008; Buckley & Smith, 2008; Leahy & Twomey, 2005).

If one is looking for ways to reach learners within their learning styles they do not have to look past their classroom computers. There is a strategy that can be used to help meet the learning styles of learners while providing a better understanding of the material being covered. This strategy is called Curriculum Webs and along with its subordinate sibling, WebQuest, may offer an enhancement to learning that has been largely untapped.

Curriculum Webs are web pages or sites that incorporate a lesson or several lessons of a unit by applying structured Internet links, a learning plan, text, and multimedia within that page or site (Cunningham & Billingsley, 2006). Beyond providing coverage of a subject, they can provide depth, breadth, and meaning leading to real understanding. Equally important, they actively involve the learner in the learning process.

Curriculum Webs and WebQuests are inquiry-based tools that may be constructed by the educator using a web-editing tool or even Microsoft Office® tools. Using the vast amount of resources found on the Internet, *multiple* sites which support the subject are pre-selected by the educator. Educators will want to spend some time selecting and reviewing appropriate sites which is also an advantage of curriculum webs in that students do not waste time surfing to sites with little significance to the lesson (Cunningham, 2006).

“**Actively**
involve the
learner in
the learning
process”

Curriculum webs for reaching learners con't

Timothy Clapper holds an M.A. in Curriculum & Instruction and is a doctoral learner. He is also President of TC Curriculum & Instructional Design, LLC.
<http://tccid.dover.net/>

If one is truly interested in differentiating the instruction in the heterogeneous classroom then curriculum webs should be considered. Curriculum webs offer many solutions for enhancing the understanding of those students experiencing difficulties while extending the lesson to generate additional challenging choices for the gifted student by identifying web sites and key questions which add to the lesson (Johnson, 2008). Too often a plan for meeting advanced learner needs involves superficial measures such as using them as teacher's aides in the classroom or group leaders during course work.

Activities such as those associated with curriculum webs may also have special benefit for ELL students as they are able to learn in their own way while developing their communication skills in an engaging and integrated manner (Beckett & Chisholm, 2002).

The time it takes to develop the lessons using curriculum webs is time well spent as is the value of the lessons where students can see, hear, and feel the material in new ways. As is the case with many strategies and teaching tools, for curriculum webs to be most effective, schools should be willing to incorporate their use as a whole-school strategy. In this way curriculum webs become commonplace and not isolated to one particular teacher. This also allows for the cross-discipline bridging of knowledge as well as a more comfortable manner in which the students and teachers use this powerful learning tool themselves.

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We hope that you enjoyed this newsletter.
Sharing information and strategies can make a difference.

Contact information: Tim Clapper

TCCID@Dover.net

We're on the Web!

<http://tccid.dover.net/PAILAL.htm>