



Coach's Corner

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"Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results."

— John Dewey

STRATEGY SIDEBAR

Walk the Line

Walk the Line is an engaging activity that gets our students out of their seats and taking a stand on issues. It works great with controversial discussions, character analysis, and historical hypothetical's. Use a piece of tape to divide the classroom into two sides, one side being yes/pro/for the other side being no/con/ against. Then fire questions. Some examples are: is it ok to cheat on a test if you feel the subject is not important for your future, or based on Holden Caulfield's character, would he partake or bad mouth today's use of social media. *Walk the line* can be used for any question that can be answered yes or no yet allows for different degrees of yes and no. For example the closer to the wall a student stands signifies a "hard" yes/no the closer to the line presents a "softer" yes/no. Once students take their stance, ask probing questions. Why they chose to stand there, or slightly alter the original question to see if they will take a different stance and always have them justify their choice etc.

Upcoming strategies:

- Scavenger Review

21st Century Classrooms: Creative Expression

Opportunities for Creative Expression, give our students the chance to demonstrate their mastery of concepts in a nontraditional way that supports the 21st century need for creating future innovators! In a way, this can be seen as arts enhancement (not to be confused with arts integration, but that's a whole other conversation). This also helps to move from a teacher-directed approach to a student-centered/project-based approach to education.

According to author Cathy N. Davison, "65% of today's preschoolers will grow up to work in jobs or pursue careers that don't yet exist." Because we are essentially preparing our students for a world that does not exist yet, students must learn how to imagine the unimaginable and fine tune their creative skills.

This is also another chance to get them up and get them engaged. Try building a life-size graph where students are the plotted points, recreate the reign of Mao Tse-tung by having a student take on the role and build a communist society within your classroom, summarize chapters in a novel by creating a "story-woosh", create a water *dance*, by having students create physical movement that represents each of the stages of the hydrologic cycle. If you want to play with some ideas, just let me know and we can create together!!

The quickest and easiest way to infuse creative expression into the classroom is to hand it over to the students. Once you have taught a concept, have the students decide how they would like to demonstrate their mastery. This promotes creativity in two ways, they have to creatively determine their project/assignment, and they have to complete it. Hold them accountable for also creating the rubric by which they wish to be graded. Yes it is a little scary to relinquish control, but you can always say *no*, so if you feel their proposal needs more work, help them to develop it. This is a huge shift in mindset, so you will be faced with students who express "can't we just take a test?" Don't let them rest on what they have done in the past, push them to become 21st century ready by creatively problem solving!

You Said It!

There have been some amazing procedures implemented in the last couple weeks that are making huge differences in the organization of your classrooms, and I am so proud of your willingness to take risks and try new things. Remember, implementing a new strategy or procedure takes time, but once it is routine it could make your classroom a stronger instructional environment!

Strategy: Creative ways to get students out of their seats and engaged in their learning.

Having students solve math problems on the windows was a great way to get everyone involved. Even the students who were disengaged or bored by the lesson were excited to show their work on the windows. —Larry Balthazar, Math

Strategy: Bathroom Tickets

After implementing the bathroom ticket policy, *the number of students who ask to use the bathroom each period has dramatically decreased.* —Brooke Shane, SPED

Strategy: Setting up reading groups with clear and specific roles.

I went from reading as a class (which led to students falling asleep or simply checking out) to reading in small groups with roles that held students accountable for their work. I've seen much higher engagement! One of my students that tends to skip class came up to me (with his bathroom ticket!) and said, "This play is interesting, Miss. I thought it was boring." Success! —Martha Kelly, Theatre