Interesting, Interactive, and Authentic: *Best* Classroom Practice

by: Joey L. Littrell

In our fast-paced society, it is essential that we provide our students with multiple opportunities for learning material. Modern students do not think in the singular, linear way of students thirty years ago, so that means that our instructional practices should not remain stagnant. We need to incorporate activities in class which stimulate students’ abilities to think through problems, communicate effectively with others, use technology to research and publish their work, multitask in group settings, and use deep critical thinking skills when reading passages and accomplishing tasks.

First, students need to be immersed in activities which are aimed at strengthening their reasoning skills. Though many students will not become leaders or famous scholars, they need to be “informed followers” and citizens so that they can make informed decisions on their own. Activities which stimulate deep, critical thinking allow students to learn to solve problems and to think for themselves. Any instructional practice which allows students to synthesize information from various sources, construct knowledge independently or collaboratively, or communicate in a variety of ways will strengthen students’ cognitive reasoning skills.

Second, instruction should provide students opportunities to communicate with others and to share information with peers, teachers, parents, and other community members.

3. technology and authenticity

4. interactive activities to increase engagement

5. Counter arguments: lack of traditional methods (sit-and-get) creates a less-manageable classroom where less learning occurs. Rebuttal: As with any activity, students must be given rules and guidelines to follow, as well as engaging activities to complete (keep students actively engaged). Once students know the structure of the activity and teacher expectations, they will begin actively constructing knowledge—though the activity may grow noisy, this doesn’t mean learning isn’t occurring. Studies show that students who are able to engage in communication with others during a hands-on, interactive activity are more likely to retain the information they learn.

6. Conclusion