

Inclusive Classrooms

10/1/2016

Getting it off the Page

Suggestions for including active learning in your classroom

All students, but especially students with autism or other disabilities, can benefit from teachers moving their lessons off the written page and making learning more active. They benefit from teachers creating opportunities for engagement with the materials.

Active learning can be the difference between a student just being present in your class and a student participating in your class.

Using active learning can also help students in other ways. Movement and active engagement can offer opportunities for students with limited fine motor skills to work on increasing these skills. Working in groups can give students with limited social skills opportunities to practice newly learned social skills in a safe setting.

Some suggestions to get your teaching “off the page” are:

- Provide opportunities for partner and small group learning.
- Incorporate learning games and activities.
- Allow students to glue, draw, sculpt or design instead of writing.
- Have students visit websites and explore new technologies.
- Let students engage in WebQuest activities.
- Let students work with objects, models and artifacts instead of paper/pencil activities.
- Create or use materials that require or allow for movement.
- Put interactive materials on the classroom floors, walls and/or up and down the hallway.
- Use drama and role play to act out concepts.

Activities & Websites

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Paula Kluth's books offer several activities that can be used in the classroom to help “get it off the page”. Several of these activities are:

- Human Calculator
- Off the Page Word Walls
- Interactive Bulletin Boards
- Walk-it-to-Know-it
- Numbers Alive

A brief description of these activities are given on the attachments included with this newsletter.

There are also several suggested websites to help with planning. These are:

- [CAST](#) – offers many ideas for expanding learning opportunities, focuses on technology.
- [National Service-Learning Clearinghouse](#) – offers projects, ideas and resources related to service-learning
- [WebQuest.org](#) – interactive webquests on everything from Civil War to popular literature for all grade levels.

Listening

Suggestions for using listening to support all students

Teachers can often find keys to teaching students through listening to students. An individual student is the most knowledgeable resource a teacher can use to gain an understanding of that student and learning about the student's talents, abilities and needs. Listening is critical to supporting all students successfully in the classroom.

Some suggestions to increase your listening and gain more knowledge about your students are:

- Tune into students and what they are saying as they work and socialize.
- Participate in casual conversations with students at lunchtime or during passing time.
- Listen for what makes students excited or worried, what they are interested in and what they are knowledgeable about.
- Listen to students during extracurricular activities (recess, dances, coaching, etc.)
- Forming a club, such as a reading club or poetry club, which allows students to choose what to read or share.
- Finding moments to connect individually with them in the classroom.

Families can also provide much information on a student. Be sure to listen to what they have to share with you. Most communication problems start with parents feeling out of the loop. Be sure to listen to what families have to say about their child.

Some ways you can do this are:

- Ask siblings to contribute ideas to conversations. Often siblings have a connection to a student that others may not.
- Learn who is in a student's family.
- Be in regular contact through person, emails, newsletters and phone calls.
- Involve them in solution building.
- Offer suggestions and let them choose the one they feel is most doable for their child.
- Have an effective pre-arranged communication method with parents for nonverbal students.
- Get to know families and who they are outside the classroom.

Activities & Websites

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There are several activities and resources that can be used to learn more about students. Several of these activities are:

- "User Guide" Brochure
- "All About Me" portfolios
- Video Clips of the student
- Parent Consults & Surveys
- Student Surveys
- Making Actions Plans (MAPS)
- All About Me Human Treasure Hunt
- The Story of My Life
- Two Truths and a Lie
- It's a Small World

A brief description of these activities are given on the attachments included with this newsletter.

There are also several suggested websites to help with learning more about your student and classroom planning. These are:

- [Person-Centered Planning Education Site](#) – provides an overview of person-centered planning and a self-study course on it.
- [Index of Learning Styles Inventory](#) – this student answered inventory will give ideas for discussion and planning (after taking the inventory, more information is given in the links on the results page)
- [Getting to Know Your Students](#) – Printable activities, lessons and teaching advice (is a paid site, but can get some resources free)