Creating an Engaging Learning Environment

Kathy Young
McHenry County College
Crystal Lake, Illinois
kyoung8236@mchenry.edu
www.kathyyoung.me

Creating an Engaging Learning Environment

• Students need to believe that they can succeed
• Students need to know that you have high expectations
• Students need to develop learning strategies.
• Students need to practice skills they will need in their careers.

A Learning Environment That Develops Intrinsic Motivation

• Autonomy
• Competence
• Belonging
• Self-esteem
• Involvement and Enjoyment

Raffini

Learning Environment in the Hallway

• Create a small library that contains books that students can borrow
• Create a bulletin board showing students who are successful learners

The Adult Education Book Nook

- BIOGRAPHIES
- FICTION and YOUNG ADULT
- EASY CHAPTER BOOKS
- PICTURE BOOKS
- HISTORY AND MILITARY
- SCIENCE/ANIMALS
- SPORTS
- PARENTING AND SPECIAL NEEDS
- SELF-HELP AND INSPIRATIONAL
- GED or JOBS

BOOK NOOK

RULES
2. Read it.
3. Return it to a bin in the Book Nook or put it back on the shelves.

http://www.getcaughtreading.org/celebrity-posters.php
**Book-a-Day Giveaway**
Teach Parents the Importance of Reading to Their Children

**Reading Opportunities**
Family Literacy Night  Incentives For Reading to Children  Free Book Giveaways

---

**Student of the Month Bulletin Board**

- Teachers nominate a student from their class who has
  - Outstanding Academic Excellence
  - Outstanding Effort
  - Outstanding Citizenship
- The student adds his/her
  - Goals
  - Favorite Motivational Quote
- Photograph of the student and this information is displayed on a bulletin board in the hallway

**Student Recognition Display**

**STUDENT RECOGNITION EVENT**

- Event held at the end of each term with all the ABE/GED morning classes
- Guest speakers are invited
  - People from the community who earned their GED and now have successful careers
  - Former students who have earned their GED
  - The college president or other administrators
- Student of the Month Winners are recognized
- Students are given certificates
  - Outstanding Attendance
  - Excellent Participation
  - Improvement

**Student Recognition Events**
**CLASSROOM ROUTINES**

Organizational Strategies

- Table by the door
- Sign-in sheet (Name and Arrival Time)
- Bin with pencils, pens, sharpeners, scissors, stapler, sticky notes, highlighters
- Small box with squish balls, manipulative items and chewing gum to help students pay attention.
- Bin with Black plastic folders—These folders are returned to the bin at the end of class.
- Folders contain daily independent work and/or work that needs to be corrected, sheets to record learning strategies, list of transition words, glossary of grammar and punctuation terms and concepts, Exit Tickets
- Agenda on white board – Erase activities after completed

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES continued**

- Each student is given a **purple** or **red** HOMEWORK folder containing
  - Assignment Sheets
  - Vocabulary quadrant pages to record their new words and definitions from each unit
  - Sheet to add new words they want to learn
  - Newspaper summary pages
  - Graphic organizers

**FACILITATING STUDENT LEARNING RESOURCES**

- Training to Credential Special Learning Needs Resource Specialists – Southern Illinois Professional Development Center
- “Teaching Students How to Learn” by Sandra Yancy McGuire
- Center for Academic Success at Louisiana State University
  - [https://students.lsu.edu/academicsuccess/](https://students.lsu.edu/academicsuccess/)
- “Creating Self-Regulated Learners” by Linda B. Nilson
- Resources for Teaching Learning Strategies and Adult Basic Education [www.kathyyoung.me](http://www.kathyyoung.me)

**INITIAL WRITING SAMPLE**

- Each student who planned to enroll in a GED/ABE class was given the TABE test and then asked to respond to these writing prompts.
  - Write a paragraph about your and your family.
  - Write a paragraph about your past school experiences.
  - This sheet is kept in the student's ABE Reading folder. If the student is in another class, a copy is also put in that teacher's folder.

**STUDENT INTERVIEW and Learning Survey**

- Students met with the teacher or a volunteer for an interview that focused on
  - Educational Background
  - Learning Strengths and Weaknesses
  - Special Needs
  - Basic Academic Skills
  - Vocational Skills
- Student completed a Learning Survey which showed areas he felt he/she needed the most practice.

**Writing Assessment or Think/Pair/Share Activity**

- Think about one subject/skill/activity that you do very well. Please write a complete paragraph that describes this subject or activity and explains how you were able to get to be so good at this skill.
  - Ask students reflect about how they mastered that skill.
  - What do they need to do master or improve their skills in math or reading?

**KEY WORDS:**
Think/Pair/Share

S.M.A.R.T.E.R.

TEACH BLOOM’S REVISED TAXONOMY

TEACH STUDENTS HOW TO LEARN

The first day of class a 26 year old ABE student asked, “What is a strategy?”

METACOGNITION

**Think/Pair/Share**

- Ask students
- For which task would you work harder?
  - 1. Make an A on the test
  - 2. Teach the materials

- Discuss with students that they need to
  - Stay in the LEARN mode, not the STUDY mode

**TEACH BLOOM’S REVISED TAXONOMY**

**S.M.A.R.T.E.R.**

- Set realistic goals
- Make use of learning strategies
- Accept your learning challenges and advocate for yourself
- Recognize your talents and strengths
- Take initiative and get involved
- Enlist support from others
- Refuse to give up. Don’t quit.

“Smart on the Inside: A True Story About Succeeding With Learning Disabilities”

**TEACH STUDENTS HOW TO LEARN**

Metacognition, Learning Styles, Learning Strategies

**The first day of class a 26 year old ABE student asked, “What is a strategy?”**

- Add terms such as strategy, metacognition, prioritize, goal setting, time management to the vocabulary instruction.

**METACOGNITION**

The ability to:

- Think about your own thinking
- Monitor, plan, and control your own mental processing (For example - “Am I understanding this material, or just memorizing it?”)
- Know what you know and what you don’t know

Metacognition

- Thinking about one’s thinking is the foundation for reading comprehension strategies
- TEXT plus THINKING equals REAL READING

GOOD READERS

- Readers use metacognition when they:
  - Preview text and make predictions
  - Make connections to personal experiences or other texts
  - Ask themselves questions as they read
  - React to the text
  - Restate what they read or summarize

READING

- Reading is making meaning out of printed information.
- We need to understand what we read, think about it, evaluate it, and store the information that we need to remember.

Learning Strategy

- A learning strategy is anything that helps the learning engage with, process, remember or apply information.
- When student use strategies they can excel.
- An engaging learning environment is created when you guide your students to become strategic learners.

Time Management

- Introduce the topic of Time Management with the Pickle Jar story
- Have students read and discuss articles about managing time
- Have students complete a chart which shows how they spend each hour of the day
- Work with them to find times that they can study
- [Link](http://students.lsu.edu/academicsuccess/studying/strategies/time)
- Meet with them to discuss their progress

GOAL SETTING

- Have them read stories about people who overcame challenges, set goals, and then succeeded ("Everyday Heroes" by Beth Johnson). Then have the students use evidence from the text to write an essay about the hero from the book.
- Read and discuss articles about goal setting
- Work with them to create S.M.A.R.T. goals
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Attainable
  - Realistic
  - Timely
- [Link](http://topachievement.com/smart.html)
GOAL SETTING

- Adult students need to learn how to set their own goals.
- They need to understand the difference between long and short term goals.
- Goals must have an evaluation component so the student can determine his or her progress.
- It is important to keep track of the progress that is being made and regularly discuss the plan.
- Goals can be changed or modified.
- When goals are met, new goals should be set.

Sample Goals

**ABE Reading Class**

- My goal is to study my vocabulary words 5 days a week for at least 10 minutes each time. I will use Quizlet, my vocabulary cards, and the practice materials from class. On the vocabulary tests, I will score at least 80 percent.
- My goal is to arrive to class on time. I will sign-in each day before 9:00. I will need to wake up by 7:00 so I can get here on time. My arrival time will be perfect on the sign-in sheet from now until Oct. 6th.
- My goal is to read a novel at least 20 minutes each day at home so I can improve my reading skills. I will use sticky notes to write down the main thing that happened in a chapter and keep track of how many pages I read by Oct. 6th.

GIVE LEARNING STYLES ASSESSMENTS

- Create a chart showing the learning styles of all the students, volunteers, and teachers in the class.
- Let students take an assessment home to give to their children or spouse.
- Have students read articles explaining learning styles and then write a summary.
- Have them read and discuss lists of strategies for the various learning styles.
- Ask them to write a paragraph which describes their learning style and a second paragraph which describes the strategies they use.
- Have students practice using various strategies in class.

Learning Strategies

- High Energy/Innovative
- Carbohydrate
- Empathizing
- *Open*
- Vowel Team
- Closed
- R-Controlled
- Consonant -le
- Open
- Vowel Consonant -e
- MEL-CON Writing Program
  - [www.melcon.weebly.com](http://www.melcon.weebly.com)
- Easy Grammar and Daily Grams
  - [www.easygrammar.com](http://www.easygrammar.com)

Materials for Written Expression

- High schools should require students to wear uniforms. One reason for doing so is that uniforms save new money for parents and children. Families could simply buy two or three inexpensive uniforms. They would not have to constantly put out money for designer jeans, fancy sneakers, and other high-priced clothing. A second advantage of uniforms is that students would not have to spend time worrying about clothes. They could get up early every day knowing what they were wearing to school. Finally, uniforms would free them from thinking about what to wear to schoolwork and learning and not on making a fashion statement. Long, uniforms would help all students get along better. Well-off students would not be able to act superior by wearing expensive clothes, and students from modest backgrounds would not feel inferior because of low-cut washboards. If students wore uniforms in high school there would be many benefits.

Materials for Written Expression

- Materials for Written Expression
  - MEL-CON Writing Program
    - [www.melcon.weebly.com](http://www.melcon.weebly.com)
  - Easy Grammar and Daily Grams
    - [www.easygrammar.com](http://www.easygrammar.com)
Multi-Syllable Concepts

- Every syllable has a vowel sound
- When one vowel letter is next to another vowel letter, the two vowels usually stick together to spell one vowel sound
- When there is a silent e, the silent e works with the vowel preceding it to create its long sound

Syllabication Questions

- Show student the word
- Ask: How many vowels do you see?
- Ask: Are the vowels together or apart?
- Ask: Do you see silent-e?

Blending and Segmenting Syllables

- Show multi-syllable word
- Teach students to look for the vowels
- Students put down boards for each syllable
- Students write one syllable on each board
- Adjust or “flex” as needed

Closed Syllables

significant

sig ni fi cant

Resources for Alphabetics

- Really Great Reading Company
  - info@reallygreatreadingcompany.com
  - 866.401.READ

VOCABULARY

- Vocabulary Quadrant
- Illinois STAR Vocabulary Booster Slide Show Presentations
  - www.kathyyoung.me
- Quizlet
  - https://quizlet.com/
- Vocabulary Activities
- Games
**STAR TRAINING**

**Illinois STAR Booster Vocabulary**

**proceed**

- To continue as planned or to move forward
- Verb
- SYNONYM – advance
- ANTONYM – stop
- Vocabulary Slide Shows - www.kathyyoung.me

**READING**

- “Groundwork for College Reading” and “Ten Steps to Building Reading Skills” by John Langan
- Text Structure Presentation (ALRC) www.kathyyoung.me
- Book for teachers: “I Read It, But I Don’t Get It – Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers” by Cris Tovani

**Teaching Text Structure**
For Reading and Writing

**Think Aloud**
Model What Good Readers Do

**READING STRATEGIES**
TEACH—PRACTICE—HAVE STUDENTS COMMIT TO USING

- PQ3R
  - Preview
  - Questions
  - Read
  - React
  - Review
Newspaper Summary

To create an engaging learning environment...

- Provide consistent procedures in your classroom
- Establish a relationship with your students
- Help students set and achieve their own goals
- Give private or public recognition for specific student achievement
- Monitor and evaluate instruction and student progress
- Teach students how they learn and strategies for learning
- Provide many opportunities for students to practice using learning strategies in class
- Demonstrate confidence that if students use strategies and set goals they will be successful

EXIT TICKET

- Give students a question to answer at the end of class.
- Ask them to write a 1-2 sentence summary about what they learned that day.
- Ask them to write down what they found confusing or what they need clarified

YOUR EXIT TICKET

- What ideas/strategies/materials have you used to create an engaging learning environment in your Adult Education classroom?
  - Write your idea on the exit ticket and put it in the box by the door. I will compile all YOUR tips into a list and post them on my website in the Adult Resources Section under the title of Reading.

  - www.kathyyoung.me