

GET THEM MOVING

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1. Candy metaphor	
2. Write it down (post-it-notes)	
3. Jigsaw Co-op (journal article) A, B, C, D	
4. Kinesthetic Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Flyswattero Wall tic tac toeo Move to the cornero Draw your answero Gallery walko Mini dry erase boards	
5. Graffiti Co-op Learning (strategies to engage the brain) <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Graphic Organizerso Mnemonic deviceso Drawing/artworko Metaphorso Cooperative Learning	
6. Socratic Seminar <i>"It is teachers who have created positive teacher student relationships that are more likely to have the above average effects on student achievement. -John Hattie</i>	
7. Think-pair-share conclusion	

Learning-Style Responsive Approaches for Teaching Typically Performing and At-Risk Adolescents

ANDREA HONIGSFELD and RITA DUNN

Abstract: The authors recommend practical techniques and resources for teaching at-risk secondary students, who are often nontraditional learners. The article describes tactual and kinesthetic instructional resources that research has shown are effective for typically performing and at-risk students who do not learn conventionally.

Keywords: at-risk students, learning styles, nontraditional teaching techniques

We live in a decade of assessments. Since the No Child-Left-Behind (NCLB) Act was signed into law in 2002, standardized assessments have been a driving force behind educational decisions, program development, material selections, and daily lesson planning in most, if not all, middle schools and high schools across the United States. Standardized tests strongly favor analytic, sequential cognitive processors—that is, students who can concentrate on, internalize, and retain new and difficult information through traditional teaching. Chalk and talk, lectures with required note-taking, assigned readings, and end-of-chapter or end-of-text questions are still common teaching practices in secondary schools. But many at-risk students do not perform well on standardized tests when taught with these methods. Despite their efforts to succeed, many of these youth often struggle

academically, lose interest, suffer reduced motivation, and find themselves embarrassed and even depressed by failure.

In response to the increased presence of high-stakes testing in our schools, Boudett et al. (2005) note that “much has been written about the possibility that school faculties will resort to ‘drill and kill,’ a response that will reduce the quality of children’s education” (700; “drill and kill” refers to the potentially harmful overuse of repetitive, drill-based activities that leads to the destruction of student joy in learning and motivation). We share Boudett et al.’s concern and propose new strategies to better equip typically performing and at-risk students to reach high expectations.

Who Is at Risk of Academic Failure?

Students officially classified as *at risk* fall into several categories. These students

- are diagnosed or misdiagnosed as learning disabled;
- grow up in isolated communities and do not begin learning English until they enter school;
- do not speak English because they have recently arrived from another country;
- live in poverty and lack basic and educational resources in their homes;
- are the children of migrant workers or undocumented immigrants whose presence in our schools is transient; or

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- are homeless and do not have their basic needs of safety and security met. (Dunn and Honigsfeld 2009)

However, many students are at risk but do not fit into any of these categories. Some students are *typically performing* adolescents, who strive to excel but invariably remain in the average or middle group in the eyes of their teachers and parents, as well as in their own eyes. Other students seem initially to perform well in school but then fall behind, become chronic under-achievers, and read less well each year, or even fail to learn to read. Finally they become restless or hyperactive. Many of these youth

- process new and difficult information globally and find it difficult to follow analytic, step-by-step teaching;
- do not seem to try or take school seriously (e.g., draw or doodle while listening; appear bored, tired, or listless);
- are nonconforming or disobedient (e.g., refuse to remain in their seats);
- cannot sit still, concentrate, or pay attention to the teacher for more than a few minutes; or
- may read, but cannot remember and often do not understand what they read.

During the past two decades, Bauer (1987), Braio et al. (1997), Dunn and Dunn (1993), Favre (2007), Fine (2003), and Lister (2005) have established that students who do not respond to traditional teaching are likely to be engaged by hands-on, activity-oriented lessons. Each practitioner-researcher experimented with tactual-kinesthetic resources and implemented a series of nontraditional lesson strategies. They repeatedly found that at-risk students responded well to these lessons and revealed significantly increased achievement, as well as higher levels of engagement and motivation.

Characteristics of Students with Tactual and Kinesthetic Preferences

Many at-risk adolescents in middle schools and high schools tend to be highly tactual learners (i.e., need hands-on learning experiences and manipulatives), kinesthetic learners (i.e., need frequent mobility), or both. Because adolescents have not biologically developed strong auditory skills, at-risk adolescent students are particularly unlikely to remember at least 70 percent of what they hear or read and thus either do not read well or cannot maintain concentration when they are not interested in the required reading (Restak 1979). These youth often struggle and fall behind in traditional classes in which teachers rely on lectures, discussions, and readings. Even when teachers use advanced technology—such as PowerPoint presentations or video streaming—tactual and kinesthetic learners need more than the visual support these resources offer.

How Do Tactual and Kinesthetic Learners Learn?

The best strategies for engaging tactual and kinesthetic learners' minds are to engage their hands and bodies with manipulative instructional resources or to allow them to learn on their feet. These strategies help them form lasting connections between concepts and their applications. Tactual and kinesthetic learners are more likely to internalize comprehensive information while using small- or large-motor movements, rather than while remaining stationary and passively receiving input from the teacher.

Related Research

Researchers have conducted over 850 studies at more than 135 institutions of higher education using the Dunn and Dunn Learning Style Model (www.learningstyles.net). For documentation of the reversal of academic failure through learning-style responsive approaches throughout United States schools, see Dunn and DeBello (1999) and Dunn and Dunn (2008). At least thirty studies have compared the effectiveness of tactual and kinesthetic strategies and traditional teaching for at-risk, special education (SPED), and English-language-learner (ELL) students at various levels.

For example, Fine (2003) gradually added soft classroom lighting and teacher-designed and student-created tactual and kinesthetic instructional resources and permitted his high school SPED students to work independently, in pairs, or in small groups, instead of relying on direct teaching and assigned readings. He reported higher achievement test scores with average to large effect sizes, as well as measurably improved behavior and attitudes toward school and reduced lateness.

Lister (2004, 2005) compared the effects of traditional social studies instruction with the effects of instruction using tactual and kinesthetic resources for the same content. The achievement of her Bermudian SPED middle school students increased statistically, and she found a large effect size favoring the tactual and kinesthetic resources.

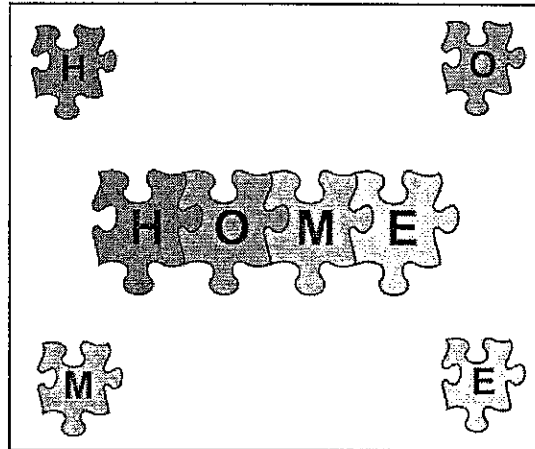
Crossley (2007) examined the relative effectiveness of a Multisensory Instructional Package (MIP; Dunn and Dunn 1992) versus traditional teaching (TT) on science achievement and attitude test scores of middle school ELL and English-speaking students. Students in all three grades received both traditional and multisensory instruction in three sub-units. The results revealed a significant impact on achievement and attitude scores when multisensory instruction was introduced.

Similar practice-oriented and classroom-based research studies have documented the rapidity with which learning-style instructional approaches—specifically tactual and kinesthetic resources—can enhance academic achievement among at-risk student populations.

Jigsaw

Overview

This cooperative learning strategy allows a student to become an 'expert' in some aspect of a topic, then return to a 'home' group to share what he or she has learned. Expertise is developed, acknowledged, and shared among the members of each group as they encourage each other in the learning process.



Note: Previous work in pairs and small groups will help students be successful with this sophisticated strategy.

Steps

1. Decide how to divide students into Home groups of no more than four.
2. Ask the students in the groups to each assign themselves a letter (A – D).
3. Have students form new groups (of all A's, B's, etc.) to become Expert groups.
4. Ask one member of each group to pick up sheets providing information and questions about their topic.
5. Allot enough time for students to become familiar with their topic, jot down notes, and check their understanding.
6. Have students thank their Expert group and return to their Home group. The A's present their expert information to their Home groups first, the B's do so next, until everyone has presented and shared the research on their topic, and has checked that the information has been understood.

Hints and Management Ideas

- Pre-assign groups. You can incorporate letter heads (a-d) and divide the class.
- Give ample time for Expert and Home groups to gather, discuss, and share their research (15 minutes is a reasonable time).
- Make sure that your instructions are clear and that they are visible for students.
- Monitor the discussions for common confusions and to be sure students are staying on track.

Benefits of Jigsaw

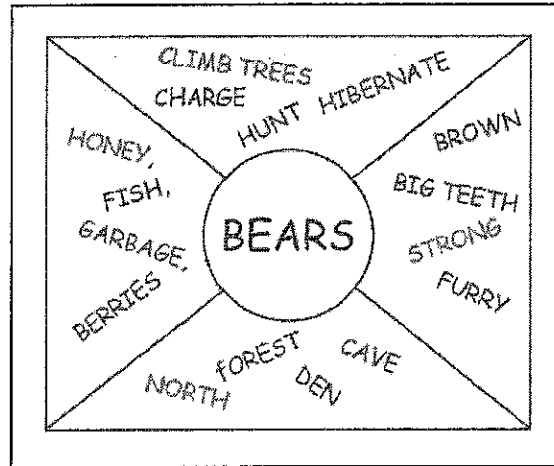
- When students have appropriate 'think time', the quality of their responses improves.
- Students are actively engaged in the thinking and in becoming 'mini' experts on the topic assigned to them.
- The activity facilitates interaction among students and gives them time to communicate and check for understanding prior to presenting to the Home group.
- Many students find it safer or easier to enter into a discussion with a classmate, rather than with a large group. In this activity, everyone gets a chance to share.

For more detailed information, refer to Bennett, B. and C. Rolheiser. *Beyond Monet: The Artful Science of Instructional Integration*. Toronto, Ontario: Bookation, 2001.

Graffiti

Overview

During the Graffiti strategy, students brainstorm ideas and record them on large sheets of chart paper. This is a creative way to collect thoughts from all or most of the students in the classroom.



Steps

1. Place students in groups of three or four.
2. Provide each group with a large piece of paper divided into three or four sections, with a topic written in the middle. The topic can be the same or different for all groups.
3. Give students two minutes to think and record their ideas on their paper.
4. Have them stop writing, stand up, and move as a group to a different piece of paper.
5. All of the groups continue the above process until each group has contributed to every piece of paper.
6. Bring the whole class together to review everyone's contributions and to identify patterns and categories in what has been written.

Hints and Management Ideas

- Use a "numbered heads" strategy (i.e., give students a number) to form groups.
- To make the activity more interesting, introduce graffiti as a concept, explain its history, and what it means.
- Use coloured markers to make the activity more interesting. Using colours will also help to identify the writers. This makes students more accountable for staying focused and writing appropriate responses.
- Remind students not to read the other responses. They should write what is important to them.
- Allot "think time" as well as "writing time" in order to help the groups stay on task.
- An alternative method is to pass the paper around instead of having the groups move around.

Benefits of Graffiti

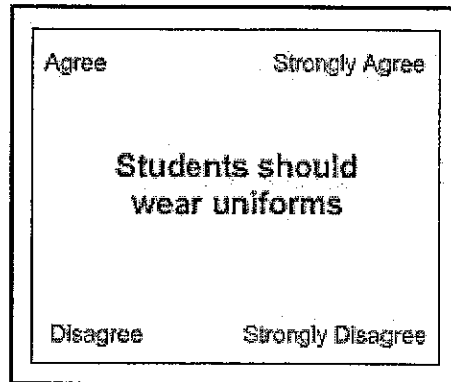
- Graffiti is an inclusive activity that can involve all students in the class (including ESL students). Students can choose to draw pictures instead of writing.
- Graffiti is an independent activity in which students can think and write their responses freely. Nervousness over presenting their own information is eliminated.
- The end product is the collective thoughts/ideas of all the class members on a given topic.
- When students have appropriate "think time", the quality of their responses improves.
- At the end of the activity, students can summarize all the ideas listed on their paper and present the results to the class.

For more detailed information, refer to Bennett, B. and C. Rolheiser. *Beyond Monet: The Artful Science of Instructional Integration*. Toronto, Ontario: Bookation, 2001.

Four Corners

Overview

The Four Corners strategy is an approach that asks students to make a decision about a problem or question. Each of the four corners of the classroom is labelled with a different response (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Students move to the corner that best aligns with their thinking. They share their ideas with others in their corner and then come to consensus. One member of each group shares the result of the discussions with the whole class.



Steps

1. Present a statement, issue, or question.
2. Provide four different responses (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), and place one response in each corner of the classroom.
3. Give students at least 10 seconds to think on their own ("think time").
4. Ask students to choose the corner with the response that best represents their point of view.
5. Ask students to pair with a classmate in their corner and share the reasons behind their decision.
6. Ask each group to come to consensus and select one person to share the group's reasoning and decision with the whole class.

Hints and Management Ideas

- Inform students that they should be prepared to share their own responses or their partner's responses if asked.
- Give "think time" (at least 10 seconds) in order to encourage independent thinking and prevent students from simply going to the same corner as a friend.
- Make sure that students get into groups of no more than two or three. This will make students more accountable for their reasoning and give them time to talk.
- Monitor the discussions so that common confusions can be addressed with the whole group and unique ideas shared.

Benefits of Four Corners

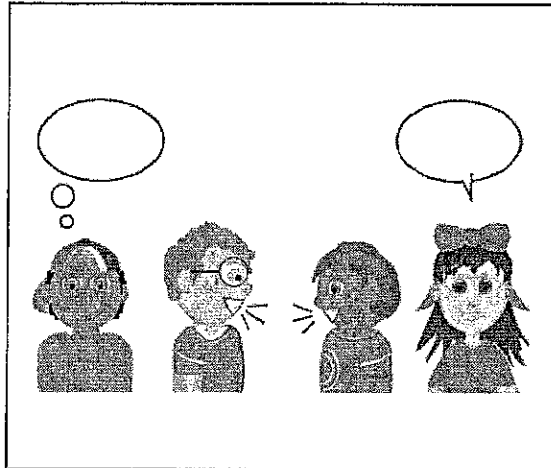
- When students have appropriate "think time", the quality of their responses improves.
- Students stay on track because they are accountable for sharing with the rest of the class.
- More critical thinking is retained after a lesson in which students have had an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the topic.
- Many students find it safer or easier to enter into a discussion with a classmate, rather than with a large group.
- It is important for students to learn that, by listening to different points of view, they can build on the ideas of others.

For more detailed information, refer to Bennett, B. and C. Rolheiser. *Beyond Monet: The Artful Science of Instructional Integration*. Toronto, Ontario: Bookation, 2001.

Think-Pair-Share

Overview

Think-Pair-Share is a cooperative learning strategy that can promote and support higher-level thinking. The teacher asks students to think about a specific topic, then pair with another student to discuss their thinking and, after that, share their ideas with the group.



Steps

1. Decide on how to organize students into pairs (counting heads, ABAB, male/female, etc.).
2. Pose a discussion topic or a question.
3. Give students at least 10 seconds to think on their own ("think time").
4. Ask students to pair with their partner and share their thinking.
5. Call on a few students to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

Hints and Management Ideas

- *Pre-assign partners.* Rather than waiting until the discussion time, indicate in advance who students' partners will be. Otherwise, the focus might be on finding a partner rather than on thinking about the topic at hand.
- *Change partners.* Students should be given an opportunity to think with a variety of partners.
- *Monitor the discussions* for common misconceptions and unique ideas to address later with the whole group.

Benefits of Think-Pair-Share

- When students have appropriate "think time", the quality of their responses improves.
- Students are actively engaged in thinking.
- Thinking becomes more focused when it is discussed with a partner.
- More critical thinking is retained after a lesson in which students have had an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the topic.
- Many students find it easier or safer to enter into a discussion with another classmate, rather than with a large group.
- No specific materials are needed for this strategy, so it can be easily incorporated into lessons.
- Building on the ideas of others is an important skill for students to learn.

For more detailed information, refer to Kagan, Spencer. *Cooperative Learning*. San Juan Capistrano: Kagan Cooperative Learning, 1994.

How to Set Up A Socratic Seminar Discussion

Choosing a text: Socratic seminars work best with authentic texts that invite authentic inquiry—an ambiguous and appealing short story, a pair of contrasting primary documents in social studies, or an article on a controversial approach or issue.

Preparing the students: While students should read carefully and prepare well for every class session, it is usually best to tell students ahead of time when they will be expected to participate in a Socratic seminar. Because seminars ask students to keep focusing back on the text, give students a copy of the article to write on, make notes, etc, and prepare in advance.

Preparing the questions: Though students may eventually be given responsibility for running the entire session, the teacher usually fills the role of discussion leader as students learn about seminars and questioning. Generate as many open-ended questions as possible, aiming for questions whose value lies in their exploration, not their answer. Elfie Israel recommends starting and ending with questions that relate more directly to students' lives so the entire conversation is rooted in the context of their real experiences.

Establishing student expectations: Because student inquiry and thinking are central to the philosophy of Socratic seminars, it is an authentic move to include students integrally in the establishment of norms for the seminar. Begin by asking students to differentiate between behaviors that characterize debate (persuasion, prepared rebuttals, clear sides) and those that characterize discussion (inquiry, responses that grow from the thoughts of others, communal spirit). Ask students to hold themselves accountable for the norms they agree upon.

Establishing your role: Though you may assume leadership through determining which open-ended questions students will explore (at first), the teacher should not see him or herself as a significant participant in the pursuit of those questions. You may find it useful to limit your intrusions to helpful reminders about procedures (e.g. "Maybe this is a good time to turn our attention back the text?" "Do we feel ready to explore a different aspect of the text?"). Resist the urge to correct or redirect, relying instead on other students to respectfully challenge their peers' interpretations or offer alternative views.

Assessing effectiveness: Socratic seminars require assessment that respects the central nature of student-centered inquiry to their success. The most global measure of success is reflection, both on the part of the teacher and students, on the degree to which text-centered student talk dominated the time and work of the session. Reflective writing asking students to describe their participation and set their own goals for future seminars can be effective as well. Understand that, like the seminars themselves, the process of gaining capacity for inquiring into text is more important than "getting it right" at any particular point.

Before participating in the Socratic Seminar class discussion, you need to read through ONE of the articles regarding physician-assisted suicide. You also need to write down some of your important 'talking points' that you would like to bring up in the discussion. Talking points need to be based on fact, and be true---you cannot discuss anything you've just 'made up' about the issue. Remember to think about the other side of the argument as well---you want to have some talking points ready and available that will help you counter the opposing side's arguments on this issue as well.

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