Get Them Focused...and They WILL Learn: Essential Strategies for the World Language Community

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by

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Introduction

This session was specifically created for all world language educators by the presenters to share classroom-tested ideas (based on research) and hands-on activities appropriate for all levels of instruction. The underlying framework for this presentation is the premise that students must be focused to be on-task and primed for learning in a well-organized, stable, positive classroom environment. Corollaries to this tenet include: challenging students to become responsible for their own behaviors and to assume ownership of self; setting well-defined parameters, criteria and expectation levels for all classroom behavior and activities; and providing multi-sensory input with reinforcement to introduce and practice new information.

This handout will provide a brief introduction to and outline for the CSC session. An E-copy of this paper, along with additional supporting information for and specific references of the research presented at this session (and in this handout) are available in a pdf file at: https://web.utk.edu/~wiley/ and can be viewed and/or downloaded on demand.

What the Research Says: Theoretical Frameworks

Efficacy of Time-On-Task (TOT)
Research validates the fact that increased TOT is likely to increase over-all learning (Gest & Gest, 2005), which logically will, in turn, create a positive cycle of positive student behavior (TOT), and positive teacher reinforcement. It is not just enough for students to appear being on-task (i.e., just looking busy); they should also be cognitively engaged (Paris & Paris, 2001) in a learning activity. Williams and Stockdale (2004) further qualify this by stressing the fact that simple task engagement by the student is not a direct indicator of learning per se, but rather, focusing on the quality of the task is more directly related to student learning. In addition, if students see inherent value in the task that they are performing, or in an assignment that they are given, they will become more interested in it (Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005). Student on-taskness is just one of the ingredients necessary for student success. Making students responsible for their own actions is indeed one other component.

Giving the Students Ownership in the Classroom
The ideal classroom environment for optimum student learning potential should ensure that the students are self-regulatory, responsible, and focused. McCann and Turner (2004) purport that this occurs through the use of what they call volitional strategies. These strategies put the students in charge and make them responsible for their actions by keeping them on-task through self-rewards, goal reminders, and positive visualization of completed assignments. In other words, students need to assume ownership of their actions (Zimmerman, 2001) in the learning process. Student empowerment, allowing
students to feel some control in what happens in the classroom environment, encourages students to become more interested in what they are learning, making them more intrinsically motivated to get on and remain on-task (Schraw, Flowerday, & Lehman 2000). To paraphrase Zimmerman, learning is not just something that just happens TO students, but rather, it should be something that happens BY students.

Student learning will NOT take place unless: there is motivation for on-task behavior, the students embrace the notion that it is their classroom, and the students realize that the best learning environment is in an orderly, well-classroom.

Establishing an Orderly Classroom
IF they (the students) are NOT listening, you may be teaching, but THEY are not learning. Classroom order is therefore essential to establishing and maintaining a positive and productive learning AND teaching environment. Seating charts?...yes! Open seating? ...no! Lists of rules and regulations? Of course! Degree of teacher authority in the classroom? That depends on many things. Wong and Wong (2004), world-class experts on teaching and learning success, do feel, however, that the formula for a well-organized classroom is establishing and maintaining discipline, procedures and routines. And this cannot be accomplished in an unorderly, dysfunctional classroom. The researchers also firmly believe in the 80/20 Principle which states that 80% of teachers are complainers/survivors, while 20% are happy and successful. How does one become a happy, competent and effective teacher in order to ensure student academic success? The research is firm on this, “an appropriate learning environment can only be maintained by effective classroom teachers using effective classroom order strategies” (Traynor, 2002, p. 493). Once order and procedures are in place, then, and only then can the teacher move on to developing and using a repertoire of appropriate instructional strategies. Which ones work best and why? Many feel that Gardner’s (1993) multiple intelligences/ multi-sensory approach may be the best, and there is solid research that corroborates this.

Multi-Sensory Input and the Learning Process
Ronnberg, Rudner, and Ingvar (2004) suggest that information that ultimately is encoded into memory uses two dominant subsystems: verbal and visuo-spatial. When information is inputted into one’s memory via verbal stimuli alone, it enters into the left hemisphere. Visuo-spatial input, however, stores memory into the right hemisphere of the brain. When new information is inputted using multi-sensory stimuli, it is subsequently stored in both hemispheres, using a linked verbal and visuo-spatial mechanism. This is advantageous to the learner (Goll, 2004) since if an attempt to retrieve information from one memory system fails (e.g., left hemisphere, using a verbal access), the other memory system (i.e., the right hemisphere, using a motor access) can serve as a back-up Griffin & Robinson, 2005). It should also be noted here that visuo-spatial stimuli to the right hemisphere also includes tactile, aural and other physical modes.
Boot Camp: Basic Training: Doug
The 3 R's: Routines, Rituals, and Responsibilities and more

Thought For The Day: Involve the students, give them some ownership and responsibilities, and make sure they do more work than you, the teacher --- not the other way around.

Routines, Rituals, and Responsibilities

• Pledge (begin everyday with a routine); "Pledge Person"

• "Abrazos" (beginning of each week)

• Feliz cumpleaños

• Standing for respect / sitting for courtesy

• Salud

• Proverb gestures

• Attendance check

• Tardy sign-in's

• Desk preparation

• Homework: graded and "confessions"

• Assignment calendar for absences

• Make-up pouch

• Grade sheet

• Internet Grade Postings

• Notebooks and the "pocket" policy; zippered pencil pouch

• "Ring Wave"

• "Papeleros"

• "Holey" people

• "Bandas de goma"
• Group movement / 5 second rule

• Pavlov's Bell

• Celebration Clap: 3 aplausos/palmadas)

• "Señor's Voluntarios"

• Pesos

• Págames

• Poofs

Additional Tips: Pattie

• Keep class rules simple and positive (e.g., Be on time; be prepared; be on time)

• Share your grading criteria and level of expectations for assignments; students are not psychic

• Greet you students as they walk into your class if possible

• Personalize classroom examples with student names and common knowledge info.

• Assign all students a number (based on alpha order of their last names) on the first day of class; have students use these to label work, books, folders, notebooks

• Have a jar with the students’ numbers in it and use to call on student ‘volunteers’

• Have a clipboard nearby on which to take notes, make anecdotal notes, and/or refer to for Lesson Plan; you may need one for each class you teach!

• Be fair and consistent at all times; have NO favorites

• Be organized and stay sane! Color code folders for different classes; put class materials away as soon as possible after you use them in their original folders, files

• Start and end on time, always!

Quickie Hands-On Activities: Doug

• Toss the Globe

• Workbook Toss
• "Shoe" Toss - Demonstrative adjectives
• Voleibol de verbos
• Tarjeta Toss
• Chicken fights
• Verb races
• ¡Avalancha!
• "Pati-que-que"
• "Caracoles" "Caracoles-Frijoles" Caracoles-Frijoles-Tomales"
• Diarios
• Charlas
• Song competitions

More Activities: Pattie

• Auction
• Action Initiatives
• Spelling wave
• Refrigerator Art
• Human Orchestra
• Dear Nicole
• Mini-micro Log

Recap and Questions and Answers
References


Bibliography


LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCES

Percent of retention

Level of involvement

10% (read)
- Reading

20% (hear)
- Hearing Words

30% (see)
- Looking at Pictures

50% (hear and see)
- Watching a Movie
- Looking at an Exhibit
- Watching a Demonstration
- Seeing it done on location

70% (say and do)
- Participating in a discussion
- Giving a talk

90% (say, do, and act)
- Doing a dramatic presentation
- Simulating the real experience
- Doing the real thing

Adapted from The Structure of School Improvement, 1983, by J. B. Joyce, R. H. Birck, & M. McRibbon. New York, NY: Longman.
TO OBTAIN MAXIMUM RETENTION OF KNOWLEDGE, THE INDIVIDUAL MUST GO THROUGH ALL THREE PHASES.

PHASES I AND II = ONLY 20% RETENTION LEVEL!
One Sheet Book "Smoosh"

1. Fold in half.
2. Fold again in the same direction.
3. Fold again as shown.
4. Open to half sheet and cut from folded side to center.
5. Open to full sheet.
6. Fold lengthwise.
7. Push outer edges together.

Flip-Flop Book

1. Repeat steps 1-3 above.
2. Open and cut as shown, stopping at center fold.
3. Fold cut pieces down at center fold. Create.
Painless Conversion From $C^\circ$ to $F^\circ$

Creation of: Judy Raman, Spanish teacher, Oak Ridge H.S. TN

Add $1^\circ$ for each interval

Subtract $1^\circ$ for each interval

\[ \begin{array}{cccccccccccc}
-20 & -10 & 0 & 10 & 20 & 30 & 40 & 50 & 60 & 70 & 80 & 90 & 100 & 110 \\
\end{array} \]

Basic Formula: $C^\circ$ doubled $+ 30^\circ = F^\circ$

Ex.: $0^\circ$ C doubled $+ 30^\circ = 30^\circ$ $30^\circ$ is two intervals to the left of the $50^\circ$ line. Add $2^\circ$ Thus, $0^\circ$ C $= 32^\circ$ F

Ex.: $10^\circ$ C doubled $+30 = 50^\circ$. Do nothing! But, $20^\circ$ C doubled $+ 30^\circ = 70^\circ$ $70^\circ$ is two intervals to the right of the $50^\circ$ line. Subtract $2^\circ$ Thus, $10^\circ$ C $= 68^\circ$ F
THOUGHTS ON DISCIPLINE

1. Organize the students and have them follow the procedures. Order will then follow.

2. Keep class rules simple for students.
   - Be respectful.
   - Be on time.
   - Be prepared.
   - Be positive.

3. The students’ expectations for YOU:
   - Be prepared.
   - Be respectful.
   - Be fair.
   - Be consistent.
   - Be positive.
   - Be flexible.
   - Be kind yet firm.
4. Identify a potential problem BEFORE it gets out of hand. Be proactive, not reactive.


7. Reward GOOD behavior. Use coupons, theatre tickets---good for a homework pass or a designated test item.

**PDW DOLLARS**

GOOD FOR:
ONE HOMEWORK PASS
OF
ONE DESIGNATED TEST ITEM
*NON-TRANSFERABLE*

[DATED AND SIGNED IN INK
EXPIRES AT END OF SEMESTER]