L E R A C

March 2009
Volume 1, Issue 7

LATERAL ENTRY RESOURCE AND ADVISING CENTER
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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Lateral Entry Website Now Available!

http://www.gcsnc.com/HR/lateral/index.htm

Find more teacher resources online at www.educationworld.com

HOW TO INVOLVE AND ENGAGE STUDENTS

By Emma McDonald

Student misbehavior isn't always about bad attitudes and "keeping reps" (reputation). Many times student misbehavior in the classroom happens because of boredom. When students are bored in class, their minds begin to wander and they start thinking, "I wonder what would happen if I..." Then the little disruptions begin. The little disruptions pile up and turn into large disruptions. That scenario can go on and on until everything is out of control. What can we do about that kind of behavior?

Keeping students involved and engaged in activities is the very best solution. When students are excited about their learning, they are motivated to pay attention in class. You get excited because your students actually are paying attention. The students sense your excitement and get even more motivated to stay in your class. The positive effects continue to pile up. Keeping students involved and engaged isn't always easy, however. Below are a few tips and ideas to help you along.

Paper-and-pencil worksheets are not engaging activities. Do they keep students busy? Yes. Are they motivating? No. Reading the textbook aloud and then answering questions at the end of the section is not an engaging activity. Does it take up the whole class period? Yes. Is it motivating and exciting to students? No. Although those activities deceptively look as though they're keeping students involved and engaged, in reality they are not. In fact, you generally can meet the same goals and objectives with different activities.

Activities that involve and engage students are ones in which they manipulate information, physically and mentally. Students need to be moving around, working in groups, and discovering information for themselves. Reading along, taking notes, listening to a lecture, or copying vocabulary words are all passive learning activities. You want to get students actively thinking and moving. How can you accomplish that? You need to start thinking "out of the box."

Do you have a lot of worksheets in your school/district curriculum? How might your students gain the same information in a more engaging manner? Break students into groups and give each group different questions from the worksheet. The group must answer its questions, create a half-poster illustrating the answers, and then present the information to the class. Students could use graphic organizers such as a web, Venn diagram, or T-chart to present the information. Your students might want to create a rhyme, poem, or song to help other students remember the information.

Do you have chronological information that students must remember? Type the information and cut it up into strips. Give each pair or group of students an envelope with the strips. Have them work together to put the events in order. That technique also could work with the steps of a math problem or science experiment. Let students paste the strips onto construction paper.

Have students retell a section of the textbook as a short children's story. Or tell it from the point of view of one of the elements or participants. Or use a round-robin story. Break students into groups. Assign each group a section in the chapter. One student starts writing the "retelling." After a minute or two, that student passes the paper to the next student who continues the story. Keep rotating the paper around the group until the entire section is retold in a story. Set a timer to help everyone stay on track.

Create mobiles that represent information. When students read a novel or a section in the textbook, have them draw pictures that illustrate the concept or events and hang the pictures on a mobile. Make a class paper chain of information. Have each student write one fact on a strip of construction paper. Line up the class in the front of the room. Invite the first student to read his or her strip, and fold it into a link. Staple the link. Then invite the next student to read a fact and attach his or her link to the chain. Continue through the entire class.

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Upcoming Events

March 2009

7	Praxis II Preparation Workshop 9 AM -12
20	Early Release / Professional Development
21	GCS ACT Frameworks 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM
23	GCS ACT Licensure Program Interest Meeting
27	Deadline to register for April 4th Praxis II Preparation Workshop
30	Protected Workday GCS ACT Portfolio Work Session 2 PM-4PM
31	GCS ACT Application Deadline Lateral Entry Networking at Liberty Steakhouse in High Point, 5 PM to 6:30 PM

April 2009

4	Praxis II Preparation Workshop 9 AM – 12 Washington Street Annex, 223 Registration Required
10	GCS ACT Cohort Notification
13-17	GCS Spring Break
25	GCS ACT Frameworks 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM
25	GCS ACT Professional Portfolios Due GCS ACT Teacher of the Year Application Deadline

Get Connected!

Save the date! Join us on **Tuesday evening, March 31, from 5 to 6:30 PM** for our next professional networking event at **Liberty Steakhouse in High Point**. Liberty Steakhouse is located at 914 Mall Loop Road in High Point near the Oak Hollow Mall.

You are invited to talk with our special guests for the evening, two members of our GCS Board of Education: **Mr. Amos Quick**, Vice Chairman and District 9 Representative, and **Mr. Paul Daniels,** District 5 Representative.

You are also invited to network with other lateral entry teachers to share instructional and classroom management strategies and with the LERAC team for additional support.

PLEASE JOIN US!

Need information on the GCS ACT? Visit http://www.gcsnc.com/gcsact/index.htm

Need information on the PRAXIS II? Visit www.ets.org/praxis

Need information on NCAE? Visit www.ncae.org

Frequently Asked Questions

I've recently received information about the GCS ACT licensure program. Based on my hire date and my licensure area, am I really eligible to apply?

In response to the current economic and financial concerns, the eligibility period for the GCS Alternative Certification Track (ACT) licensure program has been extended, for this one time, to include all current GCS LE **BT1**'s, regardless of the month in which you were hired for the 2008-2009 academic year. This option is specifically designed for those who have not enrolled in or started another licensure program and/or for those who have completed only some courses or no courses towards their RALC plan. The GCS ACT program is open to LE teachers only in the following licensure areas: K-12 Areas: Foreign Language, Art, Music, PE, Special Education, ESOL, and Theatre; 6-9 Areas: Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies; 9-12 Areas: English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. **To learn more about the GCS ACT option for licensure, please attend the GCS ACT Interest Meeting on Monday, March 23, from 5:30 to 6:30 PM in the Board Room at the Eugene Street Administrative Building, 712 North Eugene Street.** At this meeting, we will share information on program requirements, program courses, course schedules, and the program application and selection process. The deadline to submit complete GCS ACT application packets is Tuesday, March 31. No late applications will be considered. Applications should be delivered to the Lateral Entry Resource and Advising Center, ATTN: Pamela Herndon. Applicants will be notified of program acceptance on or before April 10, 2009.

Is it too late to sign up for the April 4 NCAE Praxis II Preparation Session?

Registration forms for the April 4 Praxis II Preparation Session must be submitted by 5 PM on Friday, March 27. Please be sure your form is complete. For more information, please see the attached registration form and visit http://www.gcsnc.com/HR/lateral/praxisII.htm.

Engaging Instructional Strategies (cont.)

Give students "clues" to find items in the classroom that relate to your topic of study. Engage students in a "scavenger hunt." When they find an item, they must explain why it is on the scavenger hunt list. Invite students on a road trip. Place around the school or classroom stop signs containing an activity or reading passage. Students must "travel" to each place and complete the activity *(idea courtesy of Beaver Elementary)*. Give students a "passport" that must be stamped at each "stop" on the trip.

Encourage students to make artifacts from a culture they are studying, or to give a speech as a famous historical person or a character from a novel. Give students the opportunity to act out 5 plus 3 or 10 divided by 5. Create centers for students to visit and complete an activity that meets one of your learning objectives.

Those kinds of activities get students moving both physically and mentally. Before you know it, you'll hear from your students complaints like "Is it time to go already?" and "I'm not finished." Those kinds of complaints are music to the ear. Creating those activities and planning out the details isn't easy. You have to provide structure and you have to constantly monitor and guide students as they work. You won't have perfect products in the beginning, and you'll have to stress constantly the importance of turning in work that reflects "personal best." It takes time and it takes effort. But when you start hearing those "complaints," you'll know that it was well worth doing!

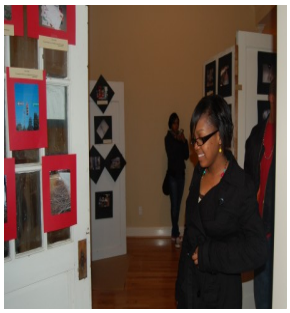
McDonald, Emma (2006, February 3). How to involve and engage students. EducationWorld.com. Retrieved Tuesday, March 3, 2009, from http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/columnists/mcdonald/mcdonald007.shtml

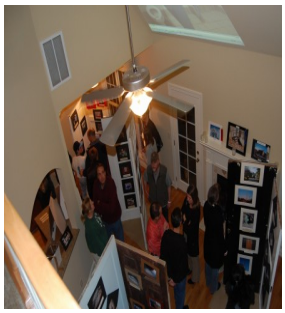
This article has been included with permission from the author, Emma McDonald, and the Editor-in-Chief of EducationWorld.com, Gary Hopkins.

To access more useful resources for classroom teachers, visit **www.educationworld.com**.

21st Century Teaching and Learning: Real and Relevant

Third year GCS lateral entry science teacher, **Dee McNeall,** recently connected art and science for an environmental unit. Through funding provided by a Mendenhall PTA mini-grant, Ms. McNeall was able to provide all of her students with a disposable camera. For four weeks, her students took their cameras and knowledge outside of the school and classroom. They carefully observed the world around them and took 24 different photographs of good and bad examples of how humans have impacted the environment. In addition to taking pictures, students also kept a journal recording details on what they observed. The art exhibit was held in a newly constructed home currently on the market -- courtesy of Yost and Little realtor, Melissa Greer, and the home builder. Over 100 parents, students, and faculty attended the Human Impact on the Environment art exhibit. Students really enjoyed moving beyond the textbooks and beyond classroom to see the real-life, global impact of human choices.





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