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Is Summer Over Yet? Getting Students Excited about Learning...and School

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We will talk about...

- *Post week & Pre-school week anticipation.*
- *Teaching your way to... Anticipation!*
- *Leading students 'getting' & 'owning' knowledge & learning experiences.*
- *Creating & sustaining an atmosphere for learning.*

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Disconnected Students

- *In schools, children have experienced a growing disconnect between their lives in their communities and what they encounter in their classrooms;*

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- *the result is often*
 - *a growing apathy toward school & learning,*
 - *a lack of needed skills and experiences to navigate learning from one grade level to the next,*
 - *an inability to 'find' themselves; their purpose.*
 - *high school and college dropouts, unskilled labor force, fewer leaders.*

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Our Responsibility

- *thus, we must connect students to what's important to them, what's local, what's in their community in order*
 - *to engage them*
 - *to build social capital*
 - *to reconnect them*
 - *to build leaders*

◦ Gregory Smith & David Sobel, *Place and Community-Based Education in Schools*, 2010

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Getting Students Excited about Learning...and School

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Post School Preparation

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What if...

- *Sometime towards the end of the school year, teachers present a trailer or a sneak peak to the incoming US History, Economics; AP English; 8th grade Science or 6th grade class.*

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What if...

- *we conducted a self assessment of the past year?*
- *we took time to find out if returning students are looking forward to being in our classrooms or schools in next year? Why? Why not?*
- *we asked them what they would you like to see, experience, do, learn about next year in Government?*

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- *Use the results of the self assessment, student assessment/responses to make appropriate, needed adjustment or changes during the summer months.*

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Pre-School Week

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Getting Ready

- *Invite students to take on a classroom responsibility (not referring to classroom chores) that gives them ownership and makes them accountable (collecting assignments; class runner; hot lunch monitor; maintaining class blog, a special bulletin board, escorting the kindergarten class to..., etc.).*
- *Send a note home about some new ideas you plan to implement to assist a student with a certain learning, behavioral or social challenge.*

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- *Learn more about your students' interest or about your students.*
- *Prepare to give students some feedback through conversation, references and affirmations during the school year, differentiated assignments, and responsibilities.*

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Staying Tuned

- *Write "notes" to your students that underscore your reaction to their accomplishment, participation, failure in activity, etc. outside of your class.*
- *You need their input: Get it! Find out how a lesson could be improved for their learning benefit.*

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Staying Tuned, Cont'd.

- *Through bulletin board, school or classroom newsletter, email, blog, facebook, twitter, announce what's on the horizon in your class this year, semester or quarter.*

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Reflect, Represent, Repeat

- *Think about the first line to a poem or lyric that depicts your feelings about anticipating a new teacher, a new school, a new class. Write it down.*
- *Share with the person behind you.*

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Context & Atmosphere

- *My Space...Your Space...Our Space*
- *Dynamic...Not Static*
- *Suspense & Anticipation*
- *Invitation to inquiry and investigation*
- *Instruction targeted; yet layered, scaffolded where needed and appropriate*

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- *Your classroom and school...a haven for acceptance, validation, safety, genuine caring, and honesty.*

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Context & Atmosphere

- *Make the environment*
 - *Personable (personal inspiration wall)*
 - *Safe*
 - *Validating -Freedom to be me...to succeed...and fail*
 - *Affirming*

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'Keeping Them Honest'

- *What determines whether we return to a particular*
 - *restaurant?*
 - *doctor*
 - *airline?*
 - *cell phone carrier?*

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- *Illinois was the first state to develop and to put in place learning standards for Social Emotional Learning.*

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Context *Cont'd.*

- *Joseph Durlak, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at University of Chicago, found that "students who participated in social and emotional learning (SEL) programs improved in grades and in their performance on standardized test scores by 11 percentile points compared with non-participating students." They exhibited greater social skills, less emotional distress, better attitudes, fewer conduct problems such as bullying and suspensions, and more frequent positive behavior such as cooperation with others.*
 - *Joseph Durlak, Child Development, Reported in "Education Week," Feb. 9, 2011*

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Important Questions

- *How can I gain an understanding of the particular talents and needs of my students?*
- *In what ways can I show my students that I respect and value them?*
- *How do I help my students recognize and extend their strengths?*
- *In what ways can I help students see and value the contributions and potential of every other student in the class?*

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- *How can I guide the development of a classroom community that is characterized by respect?*
- *How can I ensure my own cultural competence in order to be the most effective teacher possible for each learner.*

◦ Carol Ann Tomlinson & Marcia Inhean: *Leading and Managing a Differentiated Classroom*, 2010.

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Reinforcing Social Skills

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WINGS

- *An education program that teaches kids how to behave well, make good decisions and build healthy relationships.*
- *Strategies and practices in the lessons places elements of social and emotional learning into skills and exercises that can be meaningful to students, help them become aware and learn how to practice those skills.*

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Free Social, Emotional & Developmental Lesson Plans & Activities

Becoming Socially Aware

- *Be a Bus Driver* <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-busDriver.pdf>
- *Circle of Charades* <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-charades.pdf>
- *Blurt, Name, and Blessing* <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-blessing.pdf>
- *Readline Facial Expressions* <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-expressions.pdf>

Positive Reinforcement

- *Five Cents' Worth of Positive Feedback* <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-daily-permies.pdf>
- *Reassure With Routines and Rituals* <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-routines.pdf>
- *Caught In the Act* <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-CIA.pdf>

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- **Lessen Power Struggles, Improve Decision-making**
- **Promise Chain** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-PromiseChain.pdf>
- **Let Kids Solve Their Own Problems** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-ProblemSolving.pdf>
- **Play Fingers Up** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-AnswersAtHand.pdf>
- **Offer Choices** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-moreChoice.pdf>
- **Try Win-Win Grid** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-winWin.pdf>

- **Cope with Anger and Stress**
- **Human Volcano** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-volcano.pdf>
- **Cool Down under Stress** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-cool-down.pdf>
- **Try BrainSTORM for Control** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/eNews/pdf/HW-brainstorm.pdf>

- **Express Emotions Constructively**
- **Make an Apology Pot** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-ApologyPot.pdf>
- **Teach Net-L to Say Thank You** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-thanks.pdf>
- **Wrestle Worries** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-wrestle-worries.pdf>
- **Try Give-it - Get-it (I Love)** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-give-get.pdf>

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- **Talk that Improves without Nagging**
- **Dialoging** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-express.pdf>
- **Effective Feedback** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/files/HotWINGS-feedback.pdf>
- **Disagreement and Disput** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/eNews/2011.07/hot-wings.html>
- **3 Easy E's** <http://www.wingsforkids.org/eNews/2011.08/hot-wings.html>

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Video Clip

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Teach Effectively

- *Students really DO want to learn in your class in spite of what their body language, behavior, or attitudes may portray. Therefore, we have a responsibility to teach...EFFECTIVELY.*

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- *The classroom pulpit is a safe place to start, to grow, to blossom as a teacher. It is a welcoming place for the novice teacher...but not for long.*

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Teaching...A Complex Activity

- *Teaching is a complex activity. It takes time to develop effective teaching. So prepare to make the very best of the opportunity!*
- *Keep in mind that how we teach moves students closer to targeted outcomes more so than what we teach.*

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Teaching...A process of Meaning Making

- *Students receive skills and learn content using different cognitive structures. "Unless students interact creatively with information to construct meaning, there is little or no change." (Betty Garner Getting to Got it! 2007.)*

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Let's Talk

- *Match your candy bar with three or four persons. Discuss and write all the things you have to think about in the act of teaching? (3 minutes)*

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Ask Ourselves

- *Are the students mentally/cognitively engaged?*
- *What are the students thinking?*
- *What kinds of questions should I ask to accurately measure understanding?*
- *What about wait time?*

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Advice from Students

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- *A Youthtruth online survey of over 70,000 students on practical tips to improve students' experience in the classroom reveal the following advice:*

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- *Manage your classroom well.*
- *One-on-one time with students.*
- *Make learning relevant.*
- *Culture matters.*
- *Motivate your hardest-to-reach students.*

◦ student <http://youthtruthsurvey.org/>

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What Kids Love About School

- *Research done on boys' success in schools provide some insightful results. When asked what they love about school, they say the following:*

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What Boys Love about School

- *Acting stuff out*
 - *Choice*
 - *Computers*
 - *Doing Experiments*
 - *Field Trips*
 - *Food Rewards*
 - *Friends*
 - *Learning Something*
 - *Lunch*
 - *PE*
 - *Physical Activities*
 - *Recess/Sports*
 - *Working in groups*
 - *Social Time*
- Kathleen Cleveland, "Teaching Boys who Struggle in School..." 2011

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Day 1 - Start Strong

- *Greet every student - a handshake, smile or wave. The first impression still matter... Yes, even in the classroom.*
- *Make small talk with some of the students. Walk around. Notice, what students did over the summer, make friendly appropriate conversation the norm on day one.*

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Start Strong *Cont'd.*

- *Introduce yourself. Share about your teaching career, as well as your personal likes and dislikes, something about your family, even an embarrassing moment. (make them comfortable)*
- *Pass out or present syllabus/guidelines. Review and teach class expectations.*
- *Sometime early in the school year, have a dinner at your students' homes.*

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- *Keep in mind that although the reasons for dropping out of school vary depending on the students, the number one reason cited by dropouts is boredom.*

◦ (Bridgeland, Diluio & Morrison. *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of School Dropouts*. 2006.

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Learn about and practice the *Science of Teaching*

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The Art and Science of Teaching

- *Research-based instructional strategies*
- *Effective classroom management*
- *Learning goals that are established and tracked.*
- *Brilliant curriculum design*
- *Engaging, good lesson plans*
- *Good feedback on student learning.*

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- *Establish goals and track progress*
- *Meaningful assessments*
- *Ways to help students interact with new knowledge*
- *Communicate high expectations for learning*
- *Effective student relationships*

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Student Engagement

- *Student engagement is cited as a key ingredient in staying in school and being successful. Furthermore, student engagement is directly linked with student success in school.*

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Everyone Must Be Engaged.
Every Day. Every Class.

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So... Use the 10-2 Rule

- *Interrupt direct instruction once every 10 minutes to allow about 2 minutes for students to process the learning. Here's how:*

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10-2 Rule

- *Draw what they are learning.*
- *Sing about it or represent it through some movement.*
- *Explain it to someone else; create a flow chart, simile, or metaphor.*
- *Explain how it is similar to something they already know.*
- *Explain how it makes sense.*
- *List the main points.*
- *Or any other active engagement of students' minds in processing facts, concepts, procedures, skills, content.*

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TLP - Total Participation Technique

- “Teaching techniques that allows all students to demonstrate, at the same time, active participation and cognitive engagement in the topic being studied.”

◦ Persida Himmele & William Himmele, *Total Participation Techniques: Making Every Student an Active Learner*, 2011

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True or False?

- 8th grade students who are at the different learning levels should receive the same content.

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Same level. Same Content?

- Yes, but wait...
- Yes. If we mean theme, objectives or standards.
- “There is benefit to holding what students learn relatively steady while changing how we give access to the content to match student needs.”

◦ (Carol Ann Tomlinson, *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms*, 2001, p. 72)

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- For example, if a class is learning about tectonic plates, all students in the class need to understand the manner in which the plates move and the impact these movements (such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes) have on our planet.
- This is essential knowledge for all students in the class. While the instructional approaches a teacher takes to ensure that this standard is met, the standard itself must be the same for all. It is important to hold the standard constant especially for students who receive an alternative curriculum within a general education classroom.

◦ Nancy Frey & Douglas Fisher & Sandi Everlove, *How to Engage Students, Build Teamwork and Promote Understanding*, 2009.

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Differentiate

- Differentiation does not dictate the curriculum, although it does suggest-- based on research and visible evidence-- that student learning is far more durable and purposeful.

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- The primary goal in differentiating is to help teachers develop and use multiple pathways to learn whatever the teacher teaches.

◦ Carol Ann Tomlinson & Marcia Imbeau, *Leading and Managing a Differentiated Classroom*, 2010

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Homework

- Best homework tasks have five attributes:
 - Has a clear academic purpose such as practice, checking for understanding, or applying knowledge or skills.
 - Efficiently demonstrates student learning. Rubrics should spell out the content requirements.
 - Promotes ownership by offering choices and being personally relevant. The goal of ownership is to create a personal relationship between the student and the content.

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- Is doable and instills a sense of competence. Homework that a student can't do without help is not good homework. To ensure that homework is doable, teachers must differentiate assignments so they can create appropriate level of difficulty for individual students (C. Danielson, *Goals of Differentiation* 2008). It may mean making homework time-based instead of task-based.

- Is esthetically pleasing, appealing and enjoyable.
 - Cathy Vatterott, *Rethinking Homework: Best Practices that Promote Diverse Needs*, 2009

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Physical Representations of Learning

- *After teaching several concepts, ask students to form groups of four or five people for a fun activity. Then ask each group to develop a physical way to represent each of the different concepts they have been learning.*

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Think, Talk, Practice, Display

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Ask the Right Question

- *Develop a repertoire of questions and strategies for promoting thinking. Many students will tend to function on a surface level by expecting us to provide whatever they are to learn. Expect them to build, combine, extend, synthesize.*

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- *Grab a partner*
- *Brainstorm for types of questions that promote thinking, connecting to prior learning and meaning making.*

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Ask questions like...

- What do you think?
- How is that different?
- What are reasonable solutions?
- What would be a convincing defense for that position?
- How does that connect with what we already know?
- What might be reasonable, alternate approaches? How could we have used this before?
- If we were to pursue that thinking, where might it take us?
- What could be the benefits?
- What could be the implications?
- What might be the liabilities?
- How is what you are saying similar to what you said before?
- (Teaching Tips, 2005)

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More Questions (using cognitive structures)

- What sense do you make of this?
- How is this like life?
- What questions come to mind as you think about this?
- If you were going to explain this to someone how would you do it?
- What do you notice?
- If you did know, what would you say? (Use when students shrug shoulders or say, "I don't know.")
- What kind of pattern do you notice?
- Tell me in your own words what you understand.
- What do you wish was easier?
- Tell me more.
- Why? (Encourage them to elaborate without giving nonverbal clues about correctness.)
- Help me to understand.
- What do you wonder about?
- (Betty Gardner, *Getting to Get It!*)

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Video Clip

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Make learning Easier without Lowering Standards

- Because human beings are often motivated by feelings of success and also because they tend to become demotivated when not feeling successful, it is essential to find and use strategies that make the learning easier without lowering the standards.
- Use strategies like energizers, carousel graffiti, partner review, think-pair-share to make learning easier and thus increase the likelihood for students to feel successful without lowering standards. (Reword)

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Wanna Be a Super Successful Teacher?

- *In his book, Mr. Practicality, Harry Wong, tells How You Can be a Super Successful Teacher, 1986. Also available on audio tape (4 1/2 hrs). He shares how to*
 - *begin class with success,*
 - *increase homework turn-in rate*
 - *increase students' reading/test scores & reduce retention rates*
 - *teach students to teach themselves*
 - *be a caring and loving teacher*

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- *When Jesus was taken, crucified, died, and was buried, his disciples couldn't bear the thought of life without him.*
- *A motley crew! Not in any way perfect.*
- *They had been in the most engaging and inspiring classroom with a... the master teacher.*

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- *May God grant us what we need and desire to be like him this year: a teacher, a school that our students will desire!*

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God Bless Each of You!

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