

Step 1: INTRODUCTION

Instructional Alternatives

This section contains directions for the following instructional activities that can be used during the Introduction component of the 5-Step Lesson Plan:

- ✓ Open-ended questions
- ✓ Reconnecting
- ✓ 10 Most Important Words
- ✓ KWL Chart
- ✓ Brainstorming
- ✓ Journal Writing
- ✓ Student Starts the Class

Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions require answers greater than a single word or two. They are questions that encourage people to talk about whatever is important to them. They help to establish rapport, gather information, and increase understanding by inviting others to “tell their story” in their own words..

Examples of open-ended questions:

- What is the purpose of...
- What do you think about...?
- What would happen if....
- How do you know that.....
- Why is.....
- When have you.....
- How can _____ be useful to us?
- Would you tell me more about ___?
- Could you help me understand ___?
- What are the good things about ___?
- What do you think you will lose if you give up ___?
- What have you tried before?
- Tell us about ...
- What do you like about the idea ...?

Reconnecting

Spend a few minutes reconnecting with students after some time has elapsed between classes. Use this as an opportunity to review previous content and reflect on experiences in and out of the classroom.

Pose one or more of the following questions to the students:

- What do you remember about our last class? What stands out for you?
- Have you read/thought out/done something that was stimulated by our last class?
- What interesting experience have you had between classes?
- What’s on your mind right now (e.g., a worry) that might interfere with your ability to give full attention to today’s class?
- How do you feel today? (It can be fun to use a metaphor, such as a “I feel like a bruised banana.”)

Source: Adapted from Silberman, M. (1996). *Active Learning: 101 Strategies to Teach Any Subject*. Needham, Massachusetts: Simon & Schuster.

The 10 Most Important Words

The 10 Most Important Words activity helps students focus on the content of a lesson by activating their prior knowledge about the subject. It can be used before, during, or after a lesson.

Directions:

- Ask students to think about what they already know about a subject, reading, or topic and to write down the 10 most important words or phrases they think will be in the lesson.
- After concluding the lesson, ask students what they thought were the 10 most important words or phrases in this lesson and why. Ask them to compare with their original list. They may find that they've changed their mind or encountered some new words or phrases.

Adapted from *A Handbook of Content Literacy Strategies: 75 Practical Reading and Writing Ideas* (2000) by Elaine Stephens & Jean Brown.

K-W-L

K-W-L chart is a 3-column chart that captures the Before, During, and After components of a learning event. The charts help activate prior knowledge, foster curiosity and open students' minds to new ideas, encourage learners to identify what they want to learn, and help students articulate what has been learned which is an important metacognitive skill.

K - Stands for helping students recall what they **KNOW** about the subject.

W - Stands for helping students determine what they **WANT** to learn.

L - Stands for helping students identify what they **LEARN** as they read, create projects, or listen to others present.

What I KNOW	What I WANT to Know	What I LEARNED

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a large or small group activity which encourages students to focus on a topic and contribute to the free flow of ideas. The teacher may begin by posing a question or a problem, or by introducing a topic. Students then express possible answers, relevant words, and ideas. Contributions are accepted without criticism or judgment.

Brainstorming is an open sharing activity which encourages everyone in the class to participate. By expressing ideas and listening to what others say, students adjust their previous knowledge or understanding, accommodate new information, and increase their levels of awareness.

<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/brainstorming/index.html>

Robert Olden in *The Art of Creative Thinking* suggests that we insist on a quantity of ideas because it forces the brain into new and creative areas.

Examples:

Brainstorm and make a list of:

- 21 uses for a pencil
- 17 things to write with
- 30 uses for a lemon
- 14 things to wear on your feet
- 25 ways to cook without electricity
- 18 words that mean cold
- 28 places in the community where you could observe animals in their natural habitat
- 16 places in the community to take foreign visitors
- 12 inventions to be foot operated
- 15 uses for a brick
- 11 ways food can make noise
- 10 ways to get rid of junk mail
- 5 ways water can be made to go uphill
- 13 art projects you can eat
- 8 mascots or symbols appropriate for political parties
- 20 uses for Global Positioning System devices

More brainstorming examples: http://creatingminds.org/tools/tools_ideation.htm

Journal Writing

Journals can be used throughout the day, at different times of the day, and for different purposes. As an introductory activity, journals can be used for observations, questions, judgments, opinions, feelings, speculations and predictions, evidence of developing self-awareness, and connections between personal experience and new information

Ask students to look back at the last session, week, or assignment and to write reflections on their learning:

- What did you learn?
- How well did you learn it?

- So what now? What do you see as the next steps in your learning?
- What are you proud of?
- Compare your accomplishments with what you hoped for and expected at the start.
- Did you work hard or not? Get a lot done or not?
- What kinds of things were difficult or frustrating? Which were easy?
- What's the most important thing you did this period?
- What bits of reading or lecture stick in your mind?
- What idea or skill was hardest to really "get?" What crucial idea or skill just came naturally?
- Tell a few ways you could have done a better job.
- What knowledge and skills will you need in five years? Did you learn any?
- What advice would some friends in the program give you if they spoke with 100 percent honesty?
- What advice do you have for yourself?
- Think of some important moments from this learning period: your best moments, worst moments, typical moments, crises or turning points. Tell five or six of these in a sentence or two each.

Student Starts the Class:

Formulate ways to have a student start the class each day. It may be that he/she: brings in a thematically linked quote and runs a 5-10 minute discussion, recaps the learning from the day before, introduces and defines a new word from the reading, or identifies a passage from the reading that was particularly memorable or interesting

<http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Best%20Practices/Index.htm>