

Effective Education

The best way for teachers to facilitate learning for their students

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As students progress through school, the flexibility of answers become greater. If teachers acknowledge that there is more than one answer, they are conductively facilitating learning for their students. Teachers at Leesville are the most effective when they can accept that students may interpret different answers, or find the same answers in different ways. By using examples and relating the topic to other things (analogies, metaphors) the teacher is able to help students create a better picture and give them an easier way of understanding the curriculum. The best way for teachers to facilitate learning for their students is to encourage students to make the curriculum apply to them. To accomplish this task, teachers should establish an environment where students feel comfortable learning in their own way and they trust their teachers to know what they're talking about. From a student perspective, interviews with Leesville students has supported these statements from Public School's of North Carolina's teacher evaluation.

Teachers Reflect on Their Practice:

Effective teachers are always looking at ways to make their teaching better which may include changing the curriculum or finding ways of teaching the information differently, specifically referencing the needs of the classroom's students. The teacher knows their students well and is able pace the class to fit the students's needs, and knows when to accelerate and decelerate the lesson, and when to make necessary adjustments. Quality teachers need to reflect, find and change their methodology to reach more students in rich, interesting ways.

Teachers Know the Content They Teach:

While sounding like a given, there is a much deeper reason for teachers to thoroughly know the topics they teach. A teacher that arrives with a plan, a passion and a purpose, and has mastered the material, will be able to efficiently provide learning opportunities to students. Teachers who have the easiest time generating a sense of respect from their students are the teachers who have dedicated an amount of time to knowing what they're teaching and exceeding expectations.

Teachers Establish a Respectful Environment for a Diverse Population of Students:

Teachers should work to be objective, unbiased and encourage the formation of an environment where students feel comfortable to learn and participate. In a relaxed environment, a student will feel more at ease, allowing them to concentrate and focus. A student will feel comfortable going to the teacher at anytime for any reason, knowing there is somebody to talk to when needed.

"The ability to do things differently and adapt to a way a student learns like me, I got ADD and I zone out if its just the same old same old thing. Coming up with new activities helps me pay attention and it keeps me on task to help me learn."

-Patrick Rice, Senior

"I think teachers are most effective when they have a real passion for teaching so they want to do innovative things, they want to get their kids engaged, they ask them questions they want to know, and then they also care about who the student is, not just about their grades or their success in school but who they are outside of school as well."

-Olivia Huckle, Senior

The difference between the student and the learner

By: BEN ZAHAVI
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Motivation

Often, students in the classroom are unmotivated. They have a sense of obligation to work because they "have to", not because they want to. Students feel obligated to work for teachers, parents and good grades which will lead to college, a good job, and success. Students are driven by the obligation to work and institution-defined grades.

Learners, however, are curious and motivated to discover. Learners take value in their work. They believe in an earned sense of ongoing accomplishment and that their learning can produce and accomplish real things. Learners value their work and aren't consumed with the thoughts of grades and obligation.

Interaction

Students compete in an unnamed "Hunger Games." Forces, mostly beyond their control, require students to compete with one another to become the best. Students relying on grades and GPAs feel that they must be better than everyone else -- there are limited college and job spots that each student wants to fill. There is no sense of a coming-together with academics because each student wants to be better than each other.

In spite of competition, learn-

ers collaborate with others. They have a vested interest in the learning of society, and collaboration allows others to be involved in learning, not just grades. Each learner involved shares their own particular insights which can lead to better learning individually and as a whole. Also, learners have the ability to communicate intelligently and with purpose.

Learning

Memorization is a word that students know all too well. They do it, for it is a simple way to package information in one's brain for the purpose of "learning," aka earning a grade. However, this is not a practical skill that is needed to have in the future. As many adults can attest, the memorization of material in school will soon be forgotten. The real skill that people should be equipped with is critical thinking.

The learner develops this skill and uses it to his/her advantage. They are able to discover a subject and then experiment with its content to create new ideas, projects, knowledge, and processes. Then they develop their own inferences and insights on the subject through critical thinking -- which is developed by looking back at what they have learned through the experiments, experiences, and discovery of the subject. Critical thinking is the jewel of a learner's attributes that is developed over time throughout school.

Famous fictional teachers

Atticus Finch, Dewey Finn, and Ms. Frizzle are some of the most iconic teachers we have learned from over the years, all possessing the key qualities of what makes an effective teacher.

Atticus Finch

To Kill a Mockingbird's Atticus Finch, a lawyer in the dominantly white Maycomb County in Alabama, defends a black man in a criminal trial, while fathering two children. Finch's effective teaching and wise demeanor show his children the importance of acceptance. He understands that young minds learn best through personal experience, and allows them to learn first-hand. Finch consistently imparts his knowledge to his children throughout the novel, making them better learners by encouraging them to learn outside of the classroom.



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PHOTO COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT

Dewey Finn

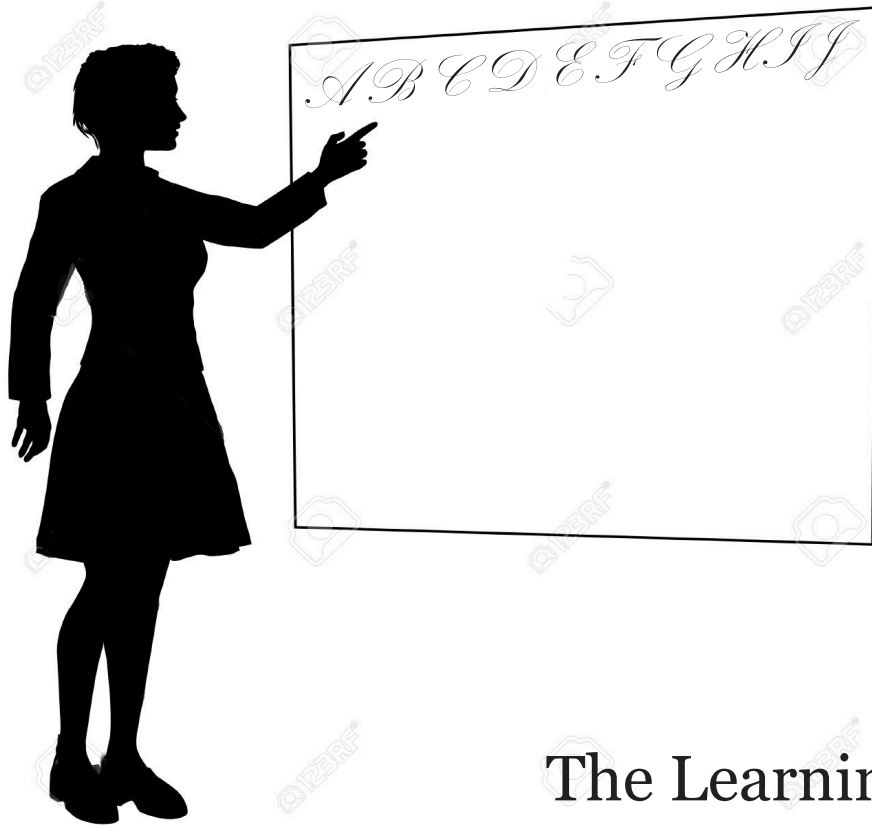
Dewey Finn pretends to be a substitute teacher of fourth graders at Horace Green Prep School. Instead of teaching the curriculum, he forms a band with the class named the School of Rock, where they ultimately compete at Battle of the Bands. Finn is an effective teacher whose passion for music flows into the classroom, where he sets high standards and gives constructive criticism. He emphasizes that students should break the mold and become who they want to be.

Ms. Frizzle

Ms. Frizzle is an elementary school teacher from the iconic show: *The Magic School Bus*, a children's learning program. The show tells the many adventures of Ms. Frizzle and her students as they explore the world of science. Ms. Frizzle is an effective teacher who maintains her students' interest and focus. With the help of her Magic School Bus, Ms. Frizzle creates an interactive environment where the students learn through experience and hands on activities.



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The Teacher

- Building comfortable relationships with students
- Setting short and long term goals for students -- and creating engaging activities that help students achieve them
- Checking student understanding during and at the conclusion of lessons through meaningful and challenging activities
- Delivering enriching, challenging content and activities that provide collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking and creativity
- Offering ownership to students for their own learning
- Teaching students how to learn, not just having students learn content

The Learning

- Failing and then growing
- Evaluating instead of memorization
- Transferring learning processes to new situations--learning to learn
- Collaborating to solve problems
- Making claims and defending them
- Communicating to persuade, defend, and inform
- Taking risks
- Creating new knowledge, ideas and content
- Empathizing with others
- Synthesizing to reach conclusions



The Learners

- Are active citizens in the classroom with rights and responsibilities they use to help themselves and others
- Are collaborators with both the teacher and others
- Are curious
- Discover, evaluate and construct knowledge after exploring and interacting with content
- Are motivated by an internal value in their work and personal knowledge gains
- Have a sense of self-value that is earned, not as a grade but as time investment and experience
- Want to learn, accomplish, and produce, not simply receive

More than one answer...

The greatest way to structure a class is to allow for flexibility and the possibility of more than one answer. Just like each student draws conclusions differently, each core class has criteria that can make it more effective when it comes to teaching others.

English

An excited teacher with constant discussion. Feeling comfortable talking to the teacher, but also talking amongst each other. The point of the class is to analyze literature and discuss interpretations on a grander scale. Excited to participate in demonstrations and class discussions. Walking away from the class feeling better about their writing and thinking skills.

Math

Asking and looking for the answer to why. The teacher interacts with the class, and spends time getting up and moving about the class to help those who need it. Grouped into four and fives, with an atmosphere of almost a team effort. Students feel comfortable to ask questions and teachers offer time inside and outside of school to ensure that students understand the curriculum.

Science

Excitement to come into class each day and test new concepts. Any written work kept to a minimum with a majority of class time spent with hands-on activities. Being able to prove that the learning material goes beyond the classroom. All kinds of demonstrations and class activities for every unit to help students understand how the curriculum pertains to the real world.

Social Studies

Provoking students to think deeper about history and analyzing to gain a better understanding not only of what happened, but why that happened. The information is always connected to current events so students see the significance of history. The teacher creates material that pertains more to the specific class and less to the text. The class is not a lecture, but a discussion and sometimes a debate.