



## 25 Super Teaching Strategies

These 'Super Teaching' strategies are not designed to be "just invented, hot off the press, new, new, new." Instead, they are designed to be effective, researched and proven beyond belief! In this document, the four major principles for improving learning are explored.

The four principles are:

- 1) Motivation
- 2) Coherence
- 3) Elaboration
- 4) Repetition

Here is a reminder: *first*, get your students involved, vested and motivated. *Then*, ensure the material is coherent to them. *Third*, make sure they get a chance to elaborate on the material. *Finally*, repetition is required for all content mastery, so be sure to include some steps that support consistent and novel repetition.

### #1 Principle: Motivation

Your students will act far more motivated with these key strategies in place. First, build student capabilities and assets. Second, make the learning process more emotional to establish a "hook" for learning it. Finally, help them get vested in some goals about the learning.

1. Ensure all students have the essential learn-to-learn skills. That skill set includes note taking, skimming, summarising, reading and memory techniques.

2. They need positive beliefs. Use affirmations on a daily basis. Structure activities where students both give and get affirmations. (See **T2T(UK)** Cooperative Learning). It's easy to get depressed when you're still a kid without a strong self-concept.

3. Students are very emotional. Remember, students need positive feelings about whom they work with. That means give the extra personal touch, use their name and be sure to show you care about them. Make sure they do team-building activities before working with their classmates so they have a positive emotional feeling for them, too. You have to build the 'will' and 'skill' for them to cooperate. You cannot assume they will do it automatically. Skilfull teammates are made not born.

**4. Students need positive feelings about the relevance factor of the content. Give them a genuine reason to care emotionally about the content. Students remember emotional events far better than bland ones. They may include, but are not limited to: all CL structures, competition, storytelling, performance arts, journaling, speaking before others, interviews and personal stories.**

**DIRECTION: Students need a way to expand themselves outward.**

**5. Goal-driven learning works for most, our energy needs a direction. For some it's freedom, for others a clear goal. Focus on goals that have the following qualities. They are active learning goals. Give students a topic; let them generate the specifics of the goals. Limit ability-linked goals to those with strong self esteem. Set aside time for goal discussions, assessments and review. Stay away from normative goals. Contracts can work for many students. Celebrate mini goals along the way. Use outcome goals for more mature students.**

## **#2 Principle: Coherence**

**Coherence is far from a mysterious element of learning. In fact, there are some very clear studies that show how it actually contributes to learning. Not surprisingly, because there are so many differently wired brains, there are many different ways to create coherence. Any teacher that sticks constantly to only one way to create coherence will find that a certain subpopulation is consistently not "getting it". Instead of blaming the students, walk through the following strategies and ask yourself if there are any that you are not currently using, but could begin to use. There are five primary ways to increase coherence:**

**6. Increasing key structural knowledge (discussion, stories, mapping, eliciting prior knowledge, etc.)**

**7. Providing experiences (field trips, experiments, watching an event, etc.)**

**8. Semantic support (use of analogy, metaphors, contextual framing, stories, etc.)**

**9. Building, seeing, using models (observation, construction, trial and error, etc.)**

**10. Elaboration over time (discussion, writing and producing the material after digesting and reflecting upon it)**

## **#3 Principle: Elaboration**

**Elaboration is essential because your students rarely get it right the first time. There are countless ways that students can go deeper into the learning. The primary tools for elaboration include the following eight strategies:**

**11. Understanding key relationships (water-clouds-rain, etc.). Identify what's key for learning this unit, then map these out, visualise and discuss it.**

**12. Transformation of content. Find a way to turn a summary into a song, an object, a mural, a flow chart, rap, video presentation, etc.**

**13. Discover new meaning from the same content. Give students a challenge to redefine the topic. Let them study, discuss or reflect; it may bring out new perspectives.**

**14. Find a new organisation of content. See it in a larger context; make a wall-sized mural or map, then critique it, globalise it and ask another class to give you feedback on it. See even more categories within it.**

**15. Break down the topic further. Uncover details within the main ideas from content searches. Many key ideas may have a half dozen sub-topics, each of those may have another dozen details.**

**16. See a video, DVD on the subject or topic. Critique it and write a paper. Better yet, let students prepare a presentation themselves.**

**17. Temporary groups used. Partner or trio sharing can be used for a topic. Let each person take on a new perspective on the subject to dig deeper. For example, students are studying WWII History. Students stand, pair up or get in trios. Let each person represent a different country and discuss Britain's action in WW II. (See Cooperative Learning Structure *Paraphrase Passport*)**

**18. Give students an opportunity to interview an expert on a subject. They might do this by e-mail if they can't do it in person.**

#### **#4 Principle: Repetition**

Neuroscience tells us it takes four repetitions to get learning stored and remembered (except for highly emotional events). Repetition is the intentional, multiple exposures to the content or process of prior learning. Many learners prefer novelty over mundane. The solution can be to use the principle of repetition, but under the guise of completely different approaches. That's why you may want to cloak the repetition under the guise of these seven instructional strategies:

**19. *Pre-expose* weeks and months in advance. Put up summaries, posters or show a video.**

**20. *Priming* by you to improve recognition. Introduce key vocabulary words weeks in advance.**

**21. *Prior Knowledge* Activation before learning. Let students preview the upcoming key points. They can read them to each other or pick the topics they're most interested in learning about. (Learner's learning objectives should be the real aim, with a little bit of expert guidance from you the teacher these can be extremely close to your own. You have to let them establish the WIIFM, what's in it for me)**

**22. *Reviewing* at end of class. Students can form pairs (Cooperative Learning Structure *Stand up, Hand up, Pair up*). One person from each pair makes up 5 review questions to quiz their partner, or they can do a quick one-on-one sentence completion of the day's info, straight from a book or handout. Pick a number between 5-10, the teams then produce a sentence with that amount of words that best sums up the lessons learning. Teams read aloud their sentences to the rest of the class.**

**23. *Guided Practice* in class. Students can make up fun signs on notebook paper with blanks to be filled in. Small groups, or teams, can quiz other small groups, or come up front and quiz the entire class.**

**24. *Revision* after 7 days with New Links. Through the use of discussion or mapping, allow students to come up with links to other topics. Remember the brain works best in a Thematic Approach.**

**25. Meaningful, Targeted, Brief *Homework*. Create study-buddies.**

**Jensen E. 1998 'Teaching with the Brain in Mind' ISBN: 9780871202994**