

Introduction

Congratulations! You are a teacher!

You have chosen one of the most rewarding, exciting, and demanding professions. You have selected a career in which you will have the opportunity to become a positive influence in the lives of hundreds of young people.



Golden Moment

A veteran second-grade teacher was enjoying the state teachers' conference. Shortly after a session, a young woman smiled warmly and greeted her by name. The woman explained, "I was in your second-grade class years ago. I want you to know you are the reason I am a teacher today. You were so inspiring!"

As a teacher, you will have the opportunity to positively influence the lives of hundreds, maybe even thousands of young people. You will experience the joy of opening the windows of the world to your students. You will empower them with knowledge and inspire them with your compassion, love and respect. You will stimulate their creativity and stir their imagination. And when you are ready to hang up your trusty colored pen or your smiley-faced stickers, the rewards will continue to come your way in the form of priceless golden moments. You have been on the other side of the teacher's desk since you were five or six years old. Now the classroom is yours. Don't panic!

You can do the job, and you can do it well. You have all those years of education behind you. In addition, you have in your hands our legacy to you. This easy-to-read, how-to book will tell you almost everything you need to know. We have combined our knowledge, skills, and experiences from one-hundred-plus years of teaching to assist you in becoming a superior teacher.

"He who dares to teach must never cease to learn."

— Richard Henry Dann

Go ahead, thumb through the book. See ... it is not a textbook. The first things you probably notice are the humorous fish cartoons, the thought-provoking reflective pools, and the reference information and ideas you can access from going to our website and downloading the free resources from our T.Box. We have used the fish theme throughout the book to unify the information and to have some fun. So suspend your cynicism, relax, and enjoy this helpful book. Read the golden moments shared by veteran teachers, identify with the personal snapshots, and try your hand at the exercises. You will be surprised at the useful things you learn.

Now, glance through the table of contents; the chapters focus on solutions for real problems that happen in the classroom and in the school environment. We've provided helpful tips to guide you through those first few hectic days. You'll learn how to maintain a positive learning environment when you have many students who are eager to learn and others who are disruptive. We share advice on how to talk to parents even if you have to tell them their child is not always a model student. There are also suggestions to help you deal with that student who is sleeping in your class and with the flirtatious teenager who has a crush on you. There is information to help you decide when you have done all that you can and must enlist the help of others. We offer many ideas to help invigorate your classroom and to keep you and your kids energized. We have even included ideas to help you take care of yourself and maintain your love of teaching and sense of humor.

As a teacher, you will be remembered for the knowledge you impart and the compassion you share. You will create valuable memories for your students because you will make a positive difference in their lives. In return, you will be rewarded with many unexpected golden moments throughout your career. This is the real currency paid to teachers and what keeps them coming back to the classroom year after year. Throughout this book, you will be treated to many golden moments.



Golden Moment

An eighty-five-year-old, retired schoolteacher sat on her front porch watching the yellow highway machinery move back and forth, expanding the two-lane highway bordering her farm. She was surprised when one of the tall workmen in his yellow hardhat came walking up the hill toward the house.

"Weren't you a teacher?"

"Yes," she replied.

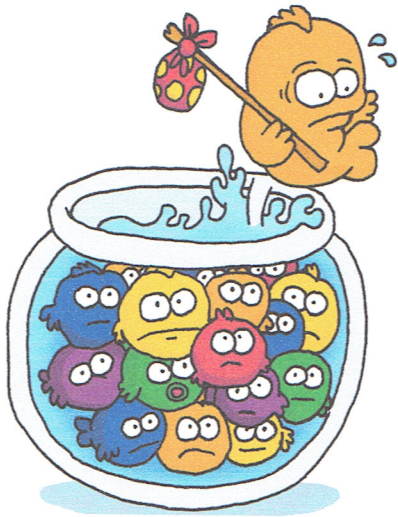
With that, the workman enveloped the little lady in his arms with a big hug, nearly swinging her off her feet. He set her down and stepped back, saying the golden words, "Don't you know me?"

The man then recounted his first day of school. His mother had made him wear short pants, and the other children were teasing him unmercifully. The teacher stood him up straight, wiped off his tear-stained face, and said, "Why, I believe you have lovely little legs. These are fine legs. Ignore the others; we'll have a good time at school today." She made sure he did enjoy school that day, and he never forgot her for that simple kindness. This teacher, long after her teaching days were over, was still being paid in "golden moment currency."

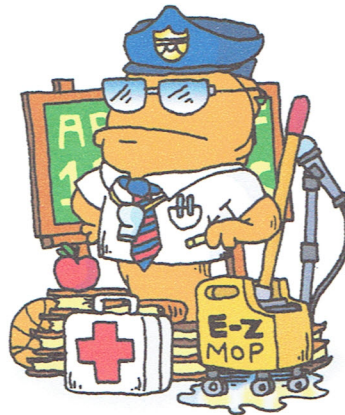
Don't ever underestimate your influence. Look at all those young faces in front of you. Your students are watching you,

listening to you and scrutinizing your words. Think about it. Most of those students sitting in your room will probably spend more time with their teachers during the next nine months than they will spend with any other adults. They expect you to teach them, guide them, inspire them, and love them.

"As a general rule, teachers teach more by what they are than by what they say." — Anonymous



Feeling a bit overwhelmed? Don't flip out of the fishbowl! You can do it. We know that you won't see all this in the fine print when you sign your contract, but that is the beauty of this job. You get to do it all. By the end of the year, you will have become a nurse, parent, counselor, police officer, friend, social worker, janitor, loan officer, bouncer, entertainer, mediator, hero, coach, politician, and, oh yes, a great teacher. You will become that one special teacher who will inspire others to follow their dreams and realize their unique potentials.





Golden Moment

The girls loved Penny, their physical education teacher and volleyball coach. They often confided in her, and some became very close with her because she facilitated weekly support groups for students whose parents were involved with drugs and/or alcohol. One day when Penny came into the office before school to pick up her mail, Jackie, a senior, was standing at the counter filling out some paperwork. When Penny asked what she was doing, Jackie said that she was dropping out of school.

Penny was shocked because there were only four more weeks of school, and Jackie had been a decent student. Jackie said that she had missed a lot of school that semester and just wasn't in the mood to finish. Penny convinced Jackie that day that she would graduate if she could just come for the last four weeks. Several years later, Jackie and Penny saw each other in a shopping mall. Jackie told Penny that if they hadn't talked that day, she would have dropped out and probably wouldn't have graduated.

We hope this book is a lifesaver that will keep you hooked on teaching and angling with the best. Peruse it, use it, and abuse it. Feel free to highlight passages and write in the margins and open spaces. Reflect, reject, or embrace the ideas we bring to you. Welcome to our world. May your teaching treasure chest be filled with many golden moments.



Chapter Four

Hooking Students into Learning

Key Topics:

- Bait-Taking Styles
- The Big Three
- The Treble Hook



Bait-Taking Styles

Trout give anglers a thrill with a tug and a run at the fly, unlike catfish, which will nibble and play with the worm before taking the bobber down. Crappie, if in the mood, will take even a bare hook and then lay over on their sides to be obligingly caught. Just like successful anglers know that different kinds of fish take bait in a variety of ways, successful teachers know that students learn in a variety of ways. If you want to enjoy the thrill of the catch and get your students hooked, you must understand learning style preferences.

Let's take a peek into historical research on this subject. The idea of differing learning styles originated in the 1970's and immediately became very popular. There is a strong intuitive appeal to the idea that learner preferences can be important to learning outcomes. In fact, those who teach and those who learn generally accept that planning instruction to adapt to individual preferences does affect how rapidly and how well learners take in new information and ideas.²

Being aware of a student's preferred style of learning, gives educators information which facilitates student-teacher interaction and leads to the development of helpful teaching strategies. Learning styles will undoubtedly differ within any one classroom and teachers should adjust how they teach to embrace a variety of styles; even going so far as to include room redesign, small group techniques, and hands on activities.³

Being aware of individual learning preferences encourages student involvement in the learning process. It helps them expand and deepen personal learning strategies, strengthens self-awareness and augments knowledge of the thought process and the factors that influence thinking. As your students are challenged to learn in a variety of ways, they become more effective learners.⁴

However, we should not allow information gleaned from measuring learning style preference to limit students, since everyone can learn from most any style, regardless of their personal inclination. It may be more important to match presentation style to the subject itself than to learner preference. And, we as educators must never underestimate the learning variable that outshines all others, the will to learn.^{5,6}

In 2009 the Pashler panel surveyed available research and concluded most studies flatly contradict the "meshing hypothesis", which simply stated is *the most effective instruction is that which matches the learning style favored by the learner*. Most of the negative press cited today concerning learning style inventories (LSI's) stems from this particular research. However, this group also pointed out that there was a lack of sound scientific methodology in the study of learning styles and that more and better research was needed. Additionally, it is important to remember, the very process of gaining information about student learning preferences encourages the teacher to be more aware of the styles of teaching they are using. The resulting variety of instruction could be beneficial to all students, regardless of matching. Even if teaching to a learner's best modality cannot be shown to appreciably affect achievement,

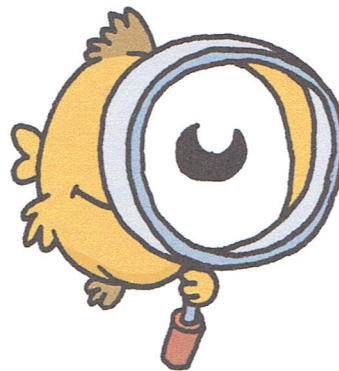
the most important thing is for the presentation to match the content's best modality. Learning is facilitated when content drives the choice of teaching style.^{5,7}

In conclusion, finding little evidence that the “meshing theory” actually works is no surprise. Children are extremely complex and in using them as test subjects, it is impossible to assure the appropriate controls necessary for effective scientific research. Similarly, the lack of support for this theory is no real loss to educators. Anyone who has spent time in a diverse classroom rapidly becomes aware that actually trying to teach a particular lesson to each student in his/her preferred learning modality results in a teaching nightmare! However, using LSI's in the classroom is still a very positive strategy. It allows students to find out more about themselves and the learning process, while it reminds teachers to be sure to use a variety of teaching styles properly aligned with content.

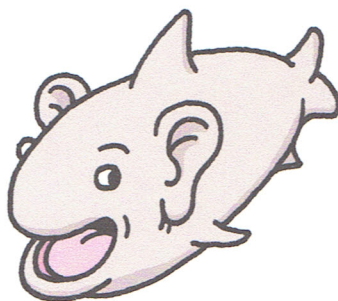
Lucky for you, several different learning-styles inventories are available to help you. Learning-style theory takes into consideration how people perceive and process information in different ways. You cannot analyze each of your students to any great depth; however, you can and should give a simple paper-and-pencil test that distinguishes between the three major perceptual learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. (See T.Box: Learning-Styles Inventories.)

The Big Three

The visual learners, the popeyed perch in the school, learn well by seeing information. They need to see the entire picture before they begin learning the details. They are usually good readers and spellers, so giving written directions and assignments from the textbook will work well for them. They



like to take notes in class. Using flowcharts during note taking (See T.Box: Flowcharts for Note Taking) and then teaching students to underline or highlight the major ideas in different colors helps them to remember. They respond well to visual aids such as the smartboard, graphics, films, diagrams, cartoons, and flash cards. Encouraging students to visualize or picture words and concepts is helpful. Visual learners pick up meaning from the teacher's facial expressions and body language. These learners usually like a quiet learning environment.



The sonar salmon, the auditory learners, learn best by hearing rather than reading information. If they say a fact aloud, they learn it better. Jingles and mnemonic devices are helpful to their learning because most enjoy listening to music. Encourage the use of singsong memory devices (See T.Box: Memory Devices). Lectures, recordings, and reading aloud help these learners to focus. Taking lecture notes and frequently reviewing the material is extremely helpful.

Auditory learners like giving oral presentations and participating in class discussions. Small-group discussions and one-on-one interviews that relate directly to class material also benefit these learners. For example, when studying the Vietnam War, an auditory learner might benefit from interviewing a Vietnam War veteran and then giving an oral report to the class.

The kinesthetic learner, the frisky filefish, learns through touching, moving, and doing. Muscle movement is necessary for creating long-term memories. A short attention span is common

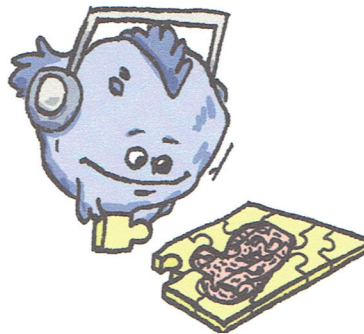
in kinesthetic learners, so they are most successful with hands-on activities. They enjoy working with objects and get easily distracted if they are not allowed to explore and experiment. These students will learn best with projects, field trips, labs, demonstrations, and role-play. Gum chewing and listening to music could actually help these kinesthetic learners concentrate.



Student Snapshot

Tony was definitely a kinesthetic learner. He worked best when seated at the front of the room, where there were fewer distractions. He wiggled in his seat and had a habit of tapping his pencil when he was thinking through the coursework. Although the other students became accustomed to his ways, it was always difficult when a guest speaker came into the classroom. We discovered that giving this young man a stress ball to knead during a presentation limited his distracting activities and made the atmosphere more comfortable for the speaker.

Useful kinesthetic teaching strategies might include making models, conducting labs, and role-playing. Hands-on activities are great. Have students trace letters, words, and pathways. Encourage them to use the computer. They should work with term cards and walk when memorizing. Allow them to express ideas through dance or drama. They can repeatedly write facts to be learned and make study sheets. Help them look for associations between class material and real life. Have them use all five senses in fun, trial-and-error activities (See T.Box: Trial-and-Error Activities).



Be sure to choose one of the learning-style inventories from the free downloadable resources in T.Box available on our website to try with your students. You will find that most students utilize all three learning styles to some degree, but one may be dominant. Take time to analyze the results with your class. It will help everyone to better understand his/her unique learning preferences, and you will have the right bait to hook learners.

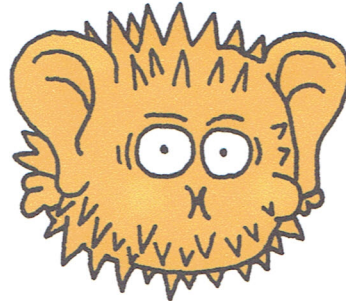
The Treble Hook

Many times, we teachers teach the way we learn best because it worked for us. Although somewhat logical, this is not the best approach. The only way we can efficiently get the subject matter across to our students is to consider all three learning styles within our presentation format. A good teacher must find out how students learn, choose the teaching style which matches the concept being taught, and include activities that embrace each modality in the daily lesson plans.

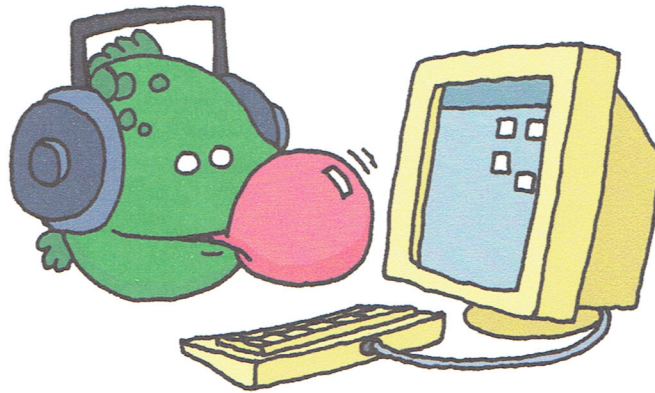
Like the angler who employs a treble hook, a device with three separate hooks fashioned into one, you should always include a hook for the popeyed perch, the sonar salmon, and the frisky filefish, respectively, in your tackle box of teaching tactics. Remember, it does not hurt a visual learner to do an auditory or kinesthetic activity, or vice versa. All students can do the same activities; just make sure you have some activities to suit each type of learner for each lesson you teach, and insure they are enhancing to the material. (See T.Box: Lesson Plan Template.) It might be helpful to go through a lesson so you can see how this works. Assume you are teaching to the following objective: *students will be able to identify the major parts of the human heart and explain its function, including the blood-flow pathway.* The following sample lesson plan includes a variety of activities for all three types of learners and accomplishes your objective.



VISUAL



AUDITORY



KINESTHETIC

Parts and Function of a Human Heart

Introduction: Present a short (no more than twenty minutes) lecture on the topic by utilizing PowerPoint or a document reader. Point out the major parts of the heart on the visual aids, explain their functions, and trace the path of blood flow through the heart. You might want to show a YouTube video of a real heart in action. Following this presentation, encourage students to ask questions and discuss the information. This appeals to visual learners because they see the appropriate terms

on the whiteboard along with the heart itself and the blood-flow pathway. It appeals to auditory learners because they hear each term pronounced properly, and they hear the blood-flow pathway explained. They listen to student questions and can clarify information for themselves aloud during the question/answer session. In addition, twenty minutes is not too long for the kinesthetic learners to sit still and pay attention.

Review of Concepts: Allow students (preferably your kinesthetic learners) to come up to the graphic and physically touch it to trace the blood-flow path while verbalizing, in correct order, the parts of the heart the blood passes through. Encourage students (possibly through extra credit) to create a replication of the blood pathway through a drawing or clay model.

Handout and Homework: Give out a list of relevant terms that the students are expected to master, along with a homework assignment from the text, due the next day, that correlates well with the subject matter. This homework will appeal primarily to visual learners, but auditory and kinesthetic learners should be able to do it competently after the classroom work is completed, as they will already be familiar with the material.

Activity: Have each student make his/her own set of term cards from the list of relevant terms (three-by-five-inch note cards work great). Each card should have the term alone on one side and a definition or explanation of the term in words or pictures on the other side. These are individualized card sets. Students should put the definitions in their own words and/or drawings. Allow students to choose how to complete this activity. Visual learners may prefer to work individually with their textbooks. Auditory and kinesthetic learners might prefer to work in a small group, discussing each term and referring to the visual resources under the teacher's guidance. Students who finish their term cards early can work on the homework assignment in class until the others have caught up.

Review: Have the students quietly study their cards for five minutes. They should look at each term, say the definition to themselves first, and then check the back of the card to see if they are correct. This will help visual and kinesthetic learners. Then, allow five minutes of study aloud with a partner. This will facilitate learning for auditory and kinesthetic learners.

Handout: Provide worksheets of the human heart with no labels of major parts and no marked path of blood flow. Have the students attempt to label the parts and draw the flow path from memory. Allow them to finish the worksheet with the aid of their term cards so they are sure to complete it accurately.

Collect Work: Have students turn in all work done during class, except the homework. Look over the term-card sets and worksheets and give completion points in the grade book.

Quiz: End with a quick quiz, maybe matching or fill-in-the-blank questions.

Homework Due: Remind students the homework will be collected at the start of the next class period. This assignment will reinforce classroom learning. Even if some students do not do the homework, they have still learned the concept. The student's grade will be lower, but he or she will not be lost.

"Education is not received. It is achieved." — Anonymous

Giving a learning-styles inventory is a great way to start the year. It allows discussion, and you begin to get to know the students through a fun activity. They feel relaxed in your class and enjoy learning about themselves. Try hard to include activities for all three types of learners. It will be obvious from these activities that you see the students as individuals and that you care about each one of them. Have fun with this, and you will not regret your efforts.

*"Man's mind stretched to a new idea never
goes back to its original dimensions."
— Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.*

