

Teaching for Success Faculty Success Center

Quick Tip 10-Idea Slide Stack: Series 3

Ten Quick Tips to Enhance Your Teaching

Edited by John H. (Jack) Shrawder, Exec. Director, TFS FSC

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Quick Tip Series 3; TIP 1

Lecture Journals—A Unique Assessment Tool

Steve McNamara Ed.D

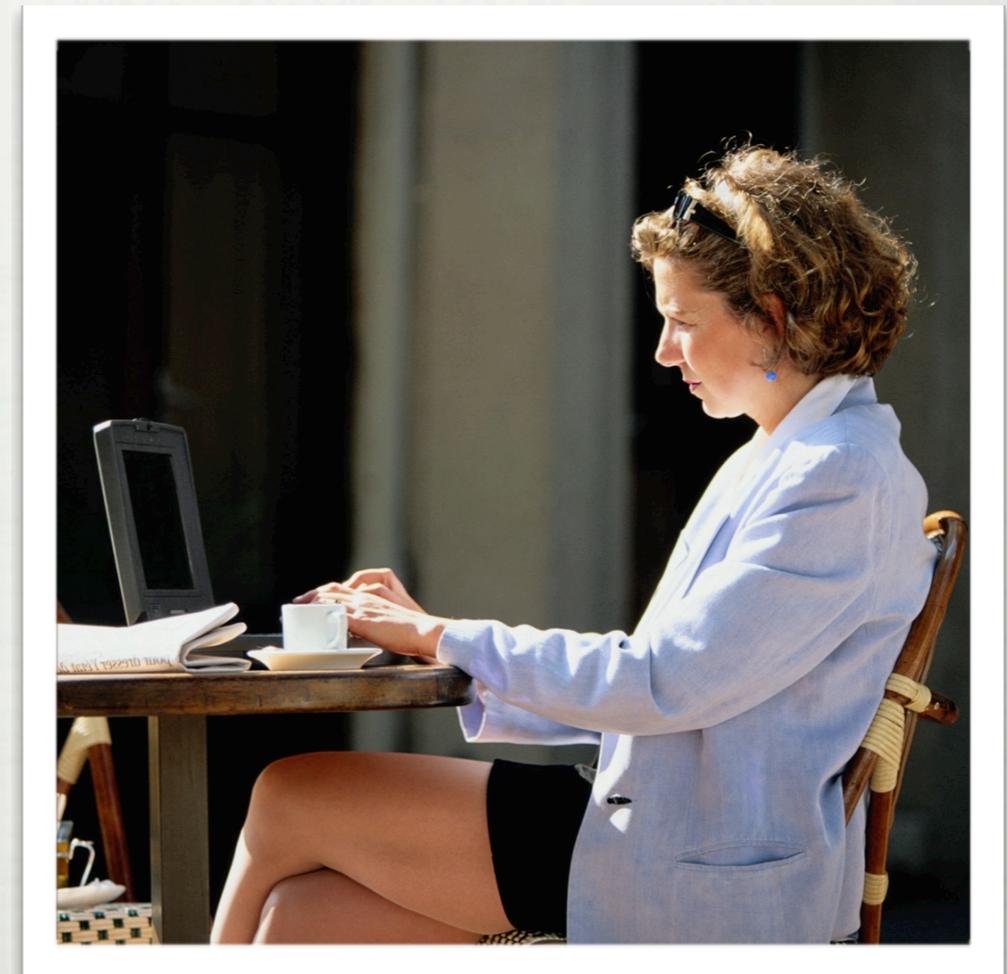
Do you find traditional objective tests inadequate for evaluating learning in your class? If so, what do you do?

Suggestion: assign a Lecture Journal, (LJ) which chronicles what actually takes place in your class. Also, the LJ can serve as a major graded writing assignment.

Some guidelines:

- The LJ gives the student an opportunity to be evaluated according to a second style of measurement.
- The LJ consists of a summary of class activities and a personal learning applications section.
- For each week of class, students write a one-to-two paragraph summary of what went on in class including demonstrations, experiments, and group learning activities.
- Each student writes at least two personal applications from this material for each week and shows how to apply this information to their own life to better understand themselves.
- Learners should demonstrate appropriate course subject analysis and language in the preparation of their LJ.

Note to instructor: assign submission date and journal format; it could be paper and/or electronic.



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Quick Tip Series 3; TIP 2

Instant Unity

Barbara Lynne Avitia

I ask each student to write a unique fact about him/ herself on a 3x5 index card. It's usually necessary to define the term "unique" and discourage students from contributing mundane items. I ask that they be specific, and reveal facts that may be shared with the class.

Prior to the next class, I create a document containing the facts from the cards with blank spaces for corresponding names. I include instructions that direct them to find the person who matches the fact. At the next class period, I distribute the sheets without a word and walk out of the classroom.

After a few moments of trepidation, they begin to share information. By the time I return a few minutes later, they are engaged in animated conversation. The tension between them has evaporated and now, knowing a little more about each other, they feel comfortable and relaxed.

This activity has proven effective in breaking down the barriers that exist between strangers. The generalizations these students may have made about one another are often replaced with genuine interest in each other's lives. They are able to relate on a new level, and often find areas of common interest that lead to lasting friendships. This exercise builds a cohesive group of students who are ready to embrace the rigors of learning together.



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Quick Tip Series 3; TIP 3

From Reluctance to Participation

Paul R. Larson

How do you get reluctant students to participate in class? The most severe answer to this question is make participation a grading criterion.

This won't bother most students, but it may create too much anxiety for some to be useful strategy. And those students are the ones I am trying hard to reach. A panel discussion at a conference presented an idea that has worked for me.

On the first day of class, distribute a few blank 3 x 5 cards to each student. If a question goes unanswered they can write it on a card and deposit it in a container at the front of the room as they leave.

Answer the question at the beginning of the next class session. It is totally anonymous and can remove fear and reluctance. It works especially well in large classes where even the most reticent will respond.

Of course, using an email, text or website message submission system will work too.



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Quick Tip Series 3; TIP 4

The Four Types of Mnemonics

Do You Know the *Four Types of Mnemonics?

What are mnemonics? To refresh your memory, they are patterns of letters, ideas, concepts, etc. chosen for easy association and therefore simplifying memorization.

There are *four types of mnemonics that, as a teacher, you should know and use to help your students remember more easily important and repetitively needed facts. Mnemonics are fun to create and their creation can be a student assignment.

These are the four types commonly in use:

- 🕒 **Keywords**—used to remember word pairs by associations.
- 🕒 **Chains**—a string or chain of images linked together to enhance recall of sequences and lists.
- 🕒 **Method of loci**—objects in a familiar place linked to new items.
- 🕒 **Single use coding**—first letter of each item word is used to create a new memorable word.

**Instructional Design Implications From Cognitive Science* by Charles West, James Farmer, Phillip Wolf



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Quick Tip Series 3; TIP 5

How's Your PQ?

Tami Eggleston

Preposterous Questions can be a very engaging and just plain fun learning activity. Specifically, I have asked absurd, excessive, fantastical and outrageous questions in many of my psychology classes.

For example, in my psychology courses I have asked the following.

What if:

- We all lived to be 100?
- No sleep was needed for human beings?
- No one ever experienced stress?
- Divorce was illegal?
- Marriage was illegal?
- No birth control existed?
- All human beings possessed viable male and female sexual organs?
- We all had perfect memories and could recall everything?
- There was no aggression?

A sample PQ learning activity: to start, divide your students into small groups and tell them to thoroughly consider the question including all social, political, economic, psychological, biological etc. issues that they can generate. Allow the groups to work for about ten minutes and then come back as a whole and share the responses. This activity could also be extended into a writing assignment.



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Quick Tip Series 3; TIP 6

A Public Speaking Teacher's Must-Know Website

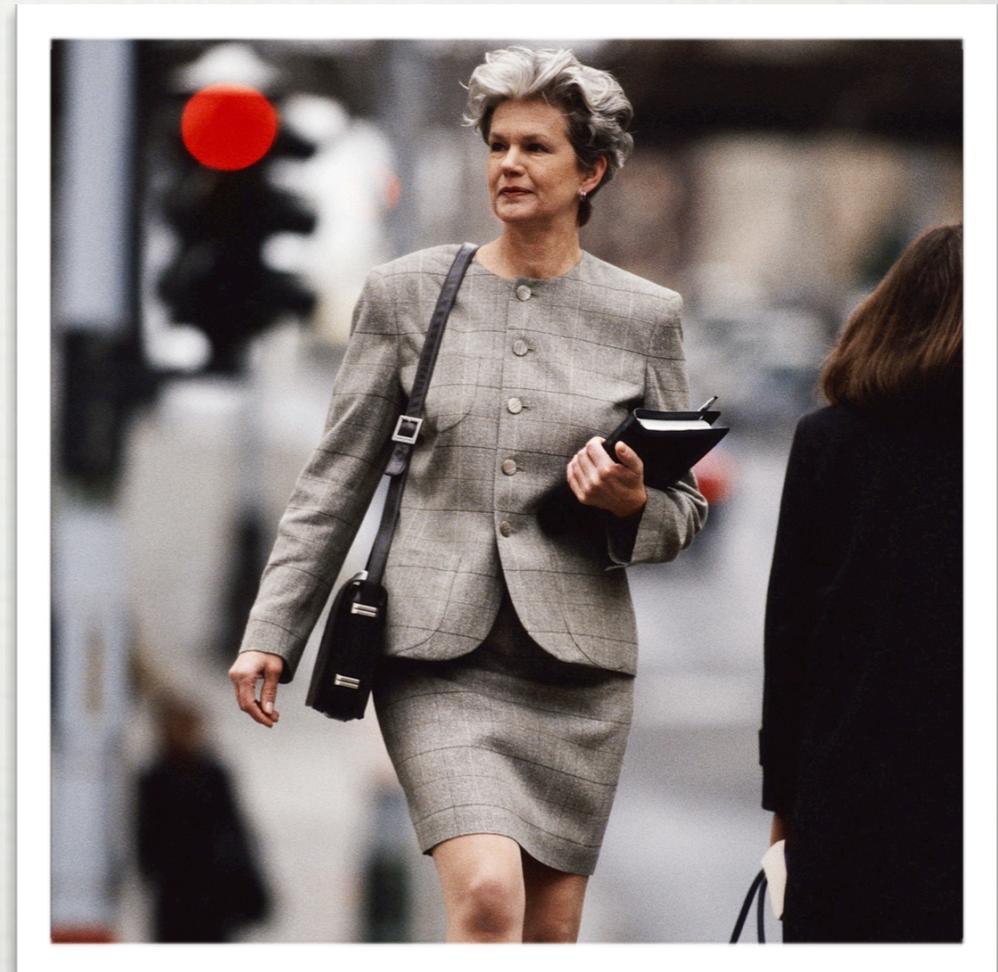
Elizabeth A. Butts

Allyn & Bacon's Public Speaking Website is every speech communication teacher's dream. You will be amazed at what you and your students can do. For example, suppose you would like students to read or listen to a famous speech that demonstrates delivery dynamism. On this site, students can do just that.

This website contains six modules that your students can use to learn about the process of public speaking and also to help them assemble presentations. The how-to modules are: Assess, Analyze, Research, Organize, Deliver, and Discern.

Use this website as a supplement to your course by giving students the website address (URL). It's user-friendly, so students can use it on their own and find what they need.

You can also use this website as a basis for creating assignments. This is a great way to introduce students to Internet information at its best, while helping them learn speech concepts. As a speech instructor, you will find a rich source of possible assignments and interactive worksheets. Check it out.



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Quick Tip Series 3; TIP 7

Goals for the Crucial First Meetings of a Course

Steve McNamara, Ed.D

Having taught for nearly 30 years I have seen and tried many activities to begin a course. I've learned it's vitally important to set goals for each class day and create a plan to achieve them. For example, here are some of my goals for the first and second days of a new term.

My first class meeting goals are:

- Ensure students feel comfortable.
- Help them meet their classmates.
- Review study tips.
- Show my teaching style and personality.
- Hand out syllabus.
- Take attendance and learn the individual needs of my students.

Goals for class meeting two are:

- Review student names.
- Recapitulate the syllabus.
- Further demonstrate your personality and teaching style.
- Learn relevant information about the class.



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Quick Tip Series 3; TIP 8

Creating a MAP to Creativity for Your Students

David E. Balch, Ph.D.

If you are puzzled about how to start teaching about creativity in your class, you might start with these three fundamentals. These three points can serve as stimulating topics for short, small-group discussions. Ask the groups to provide more explicit definitions of each term and provide examples of how they can be used in the content of your class to further creativity.

- **Motivation:** Why are some people more creative act, than others? It is just a matter of the person's abilities?
- **Abilities:** How are abilities obtained? Are they separate from motivation? Can a person with little ability be creative?
- **Practice:** What is the role of practice? Can too much practice inhibit novel and useful responses to problems and challenges, or does practice always enhance creativity and mastery at the same time?



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Quick Tip Series 3; TIP 9

Examining Learning Performance Anxiety

Pamela Thompson

One of the objectives in my educational psychology course is for students to recognize the impact of individual differences on learning.

During an appropriate class meeting and after the students have briefly introduced themselves, I have them get into groups. I then pass out boxes of puzzles ranging in difficulty from 25 pieces to 200 pieces.

They have 15 minutes to complete the puzzles. As might be expected, the group with the simplest puzzle finishes first and someone in the group proudly announces “We’re done!” Often a student from another group will say “Who cares!” Some groups will try and speedup to be the next group to finish, encouraging competition. Others will continue to work diligently, ignoring the enthusiasm of the second group that completes the puzzle.

By this time someone in the group with the 100-piece puzzle usually groans, “We’ll never get this done.” At the end of the allotted time, I encourage the class to react and reflect upon the activity. Students are anxious to share how they felt to be the class leaders, what it felt like to have to compete, and how it felt to know they would never be able to complete the puzzle in time.

The activity provides the students with a simple, personally relevant discussion of how to create a positive learning environment.



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Quick Tip Series 3; TIP 10

Class Participation: How to Increase It; How to Evaluate It

Steve McNamara, Ed.D.

At the beginning of my class I hand out a “Student Participation Record Form” to each student. I explain that once a week I will collect these forms, record them on a master record and then return them to the students for another week. It’s the students’ responsibility to briefly record on the form their contributions in participation.

Symbols representing forms of participation make record keeping quite simple. I use the following Key Code: **??** for asked a question, **A?** for answered a question, **C** means offered a comment, **V** indicates volunteering for a learning activity such as group leader, etc.

You may want students to write a brief one-sentence summary on their form explaining the details of their specific contribution. Then you record only the symbols of participation for each student once a week and return the form to the student. It’s easy to see quickly who is participating and who is not.

Highlight the master record to indicate students who are offering superior participation. At the end of the semester, collect the student record forms and compute a grade based on the quantity and quality of the student’s participation.



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