High Impact Teaching For Success

The Journey to High Impact Teaching and Learning

Benefits:

- **Retention**
- **Performance**
- **Satisfaction**

Three Easy Pieces

- Adventure Prep
- Expedition Outfitting
- Trek Improvement
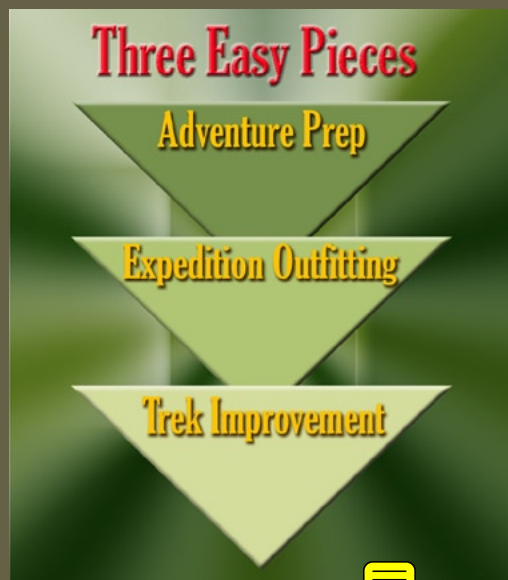
High Impact Teaching: Building the Foundation

Getting Your Bearings

TFS: What's in It for You?

Are you ready for a new teaching and learning adventure? High-Impact Teaching means constructing a simple, sensible, and doable approach to teaching and learning. The need for better retention (learning and student), higher performance (achieving measurable outcomes goals) and boosting satisfaction levels for you and your students is paramount to high-impact execution.

High-Impact Teaching is a journey and a true adventure. No two classes are ever the same; new e-tools for creating, delivering, and assessing instruction are coming online every few months. And almost everyday, fresh cognitive research is telling us more precisely how students learn and what teachers can do to help students learn more in less time.

It's about You and Growth, Improvement, and Satisfaction

What is success? We define success very simply: it's developing the skills and knowledge needed to set

> **Three Steps to High-Impact Teaching in every Issue:**
> ✔ Adventure Prep
> ✔ Expedition Outfitting
> ✔ Trek Improvement

and achieve quality outcomes. It's learning to learn from each attempt to improve so that effort is never wasted and desired results are obtained.

To optimize TFS issues as travel guides to high-impact teaching, each issue has three parts:

- **Adventure Prep**: Insights into the fundamentals laws and principles of success.
- **Expedition Outfitting**: The trading post where you can equip yourself with effective tools and practices you'll need for any instructional voyage.
- **Trek Improvement**: Around the campfire you can put concepts to work, take action, customize ideas to meet your teaching needs, and network with colleagues.

Section I. Adventure Prep

Normal is not good.
~Karim Rashid

▶ **ADVENTURE PREP**

Preparation and the Laws of Successful Travel

Before taking the first step of a 1000-mile journey, before you stock up on camping equipment, dried food, no-wrinkle outfits, insect repellent and all the other supplies that experienced travelers have learned to pack (and certainly before shoving off) study, learn, and carefully apply basic success principles to trip planning.

The "Adventure Prep" section contains ideas, basic knowledge, and practical applications of the many success laws and principles needed by the traveler who wants to better her chances of arriving at the desired destination on time and with a sense of fulfillment and enjoyment.

Familiarity with these laws is absolutely necessary, if you wish to become a person who decides to leave the comfort zone behind and then, through continuous improvement efforts, become a high-impact teacher. In short, to achieve more you must become more and you become more through mastery of the fundamental laws of success.

Useful Laws of Teaching and Life-Travel Success

Here's a partial list of success-laws to be examined in this and upcoming Teaching For Success issues. The goal is to use the following laws to propel us on a successful odyssey to high impact teaching:

- Mindset and Self-Concept
- Cause and Affect
- Belief
- Expectations
- Attraction
- Concentration
- Habit
- Subconscious Activity
- Correspondence
- 80/20 Effectiveness
- Information Processing
- Cognitive Principles of Memory, Retention, and Learning
- Transfer
- Useful Structures

> For me, goals are my road map to the life I want. They have helped me accomplish things I once thought were impossible.
> ~Catherine Pulsifer

High Impact Basics: Switch "On" for Success

The Essential Why: Why are You Teaching?

Developing a high-impact mindset requires that you know why you are teaching. What is it you want? Recognition? Appreciation? Satisfaction from serving others? Make a list. Be honest. Take the TFS challenge; do it now. If you are using Adobe Acrobat Reader, just click and start typing in the field below.

Next, what are your expectations for yourself and for your students? These are crucial and become high-impact performance controls like a mental dimmer switch. Expectations influence outcomes. It follows the law of belief, you see what you believe; you tend to get what you expect.

Positive expectations fuel performance. Negative ones tend to lower achievement. Therefore, high-impact teaching begins with an honest appraisal of your expectation mindset. Write your expectations now.

Power Shortage?

Personal Power: The Key to High Impact Teaching

Teaching apathetic, under-prepared students? Wrestling with learning styles, active learning strategies, outcome attainment? Do you have the feeling college teaching has fundamentally changed somehow when you weren't looking? Is the economic sea change adding significant stress and strain to your personal life?

If you're nodding in the affirmative, your personal power and energy may be nearing depletion, as mine does at times. I've wondered, is this a case of "What can't be cured must be endured?" Must I just wait it out until things get better? No, not at all. There are active, positive steps you and I can take to put some fire back in our personal power levels.

Step one

Pinpoint the cause of your power drain. Just as an electrical leak can slowly but surely deplete even the largest, strongest battery, difficult situations can lower our personal power and self-confidence. Low self-confidence can result when we see things start to spin out of control.

For example, if you're not prepared, walking into a classroom or signing in online to find a group of unmotivated, passionless, and uncommitted students can quickly drain your personal power. When reality fails to meet expectations, mental energy is taxed. We are all having to adjust to what feels like a fantastic rate of change and high level of instability in our work and personal lives.

At the first sign of diminishing personal power levels, you need to make a firm decision to stop, challenge, and choose the path you want to take.

There are three steps to Present Time Power Consciousness:
- Stop and access how you feel.
- Challenge yourself to take charge of your state of mind.
- Choose an action to positively impact your feelings.

First, remind yourself that you have a choice in how to respond to any teaching situation. You have the power to assess, challenge, and choose.
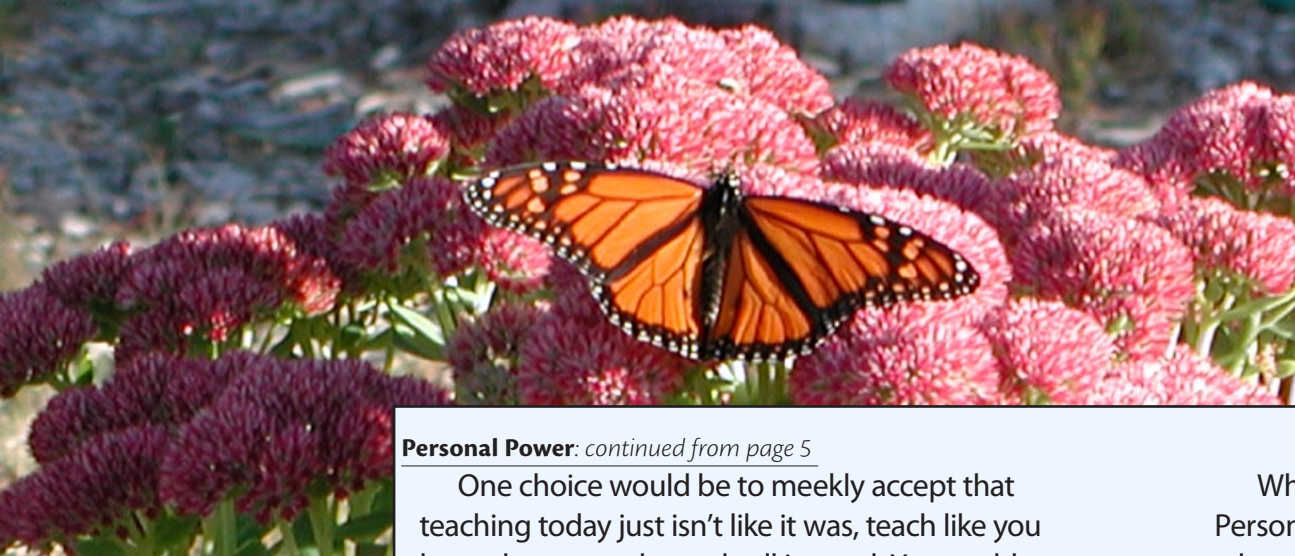
> In a world enriched by abundance but disrupted by the automation and outsourcing of white-collar work, everyone, regardless of profession, must cultivate an artistic sensibility. ...today we must all be designers.
>
> ~ Daniel H. Pink

ADVENTURE PREP

One choice would be to meekly accept that teaching today just isn't like it was, teach like you have always taught, and call it good. You could adopt the view that, after all, you can't change students, society, or higher education.

The power to lead

But perhaps you can. What if you decide to see your teaching situation as a challenge to be met and a problem to solve? What if you decide to lead?

Have you read the book *Tribes* by Seth Godin? Did you know you don't need a title, an appointed position of authority, or an election-day victory to lead and make real changes? As Godin points out, the majority of people need and want to be led.

What do you really need to lead your students? A healthy sense of personal power, a clear direction, and a decision to make it happen. That's all it really takes.

With those three fundamentals you can make a decided difference in your classroom or online course beginning right here, right now.

What can you do to regain lost personal power? Personal power comes from your self-conversation about who you are and what your value is to the universe, your society, community, employer, students, family, and self.
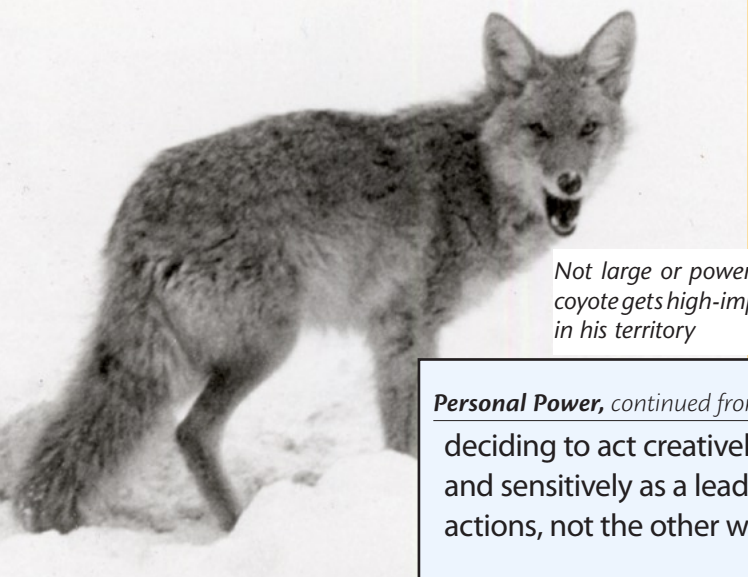
When it comes down to it, personal power is a choice. It doesn't depend on the direction of the stock market, the price of oil, or the value of real estate. Ultimately, you can decide and set your value level. It's like setting the dimmer switch on a lamp from just glowing to full brilliance.

If your sense of power and well being has eroded, almost unnoticed, by all the negative news of the past two years, it's time to stop, assess, and decide how powerful and effective you want to be in teaching and in life.

To be an outcome-achieving, high-impact teacher, you need high levels of personal power. Your students will perceive this power as confidence and commitment, and they will respond positively to your energy and determination.

A high personal energy level goes a long way toward helping you stay in a creative zone. You get there by

Not large or powerful, yet the coyote gets high-impact respect in his territory

By forgetting the trivial, we leave room for the more important and meaningful experiences that shape who we are and establish our individuality.
~David A Sousa

ADVENTURE PREP

**Personal Power,** continued from page 6

deciding to act creatively, boldly, firmly, and sensitively as a leader. Feelings follow actions, not the other way around.

During the past two decades or so, teachers have been urged to match their teaching to students' learning styles and become totally student-centered.

This instructional view is a positive change from the previous era of totally teacher-centered classes. But today we need a collaborative and active learning environment that the teacher initiates and leads.

This sounds good in theory, but in practice, many students don't know what their preferred learning style is, beyond preferring one of the see, hear, or do categories. And, adopting a total learner-centered teaching approach can leave you feeling confused and drained of personal power, trying to continuously adapt to and guess "what students want."

This may sound heretical, but to be an effective teacher you must operate first from your strengths, talents, and experience. Of course, you must be open to understanding and regularly assessing the needs of your students. But you must not

allow your personal power to be drained by situations created by your own failure to lead your class, create boundaries for behavior, and maintain fair and rigorous academic standards.

Teaching today takes an incredible amount of self-confidence, and self-confidence for most of us doesn't just happen spontaneously. No, self-confidence and personal power must be built and maintained.

How can you recharge and maintain healthy power levels? First, assess your power linkages and determine what is keeping you going. Is it a belief, a commitment, a personal value? Whatever it is, strengthen the linkage with directed thought.

Affirmations, "Afformations" and Meditation

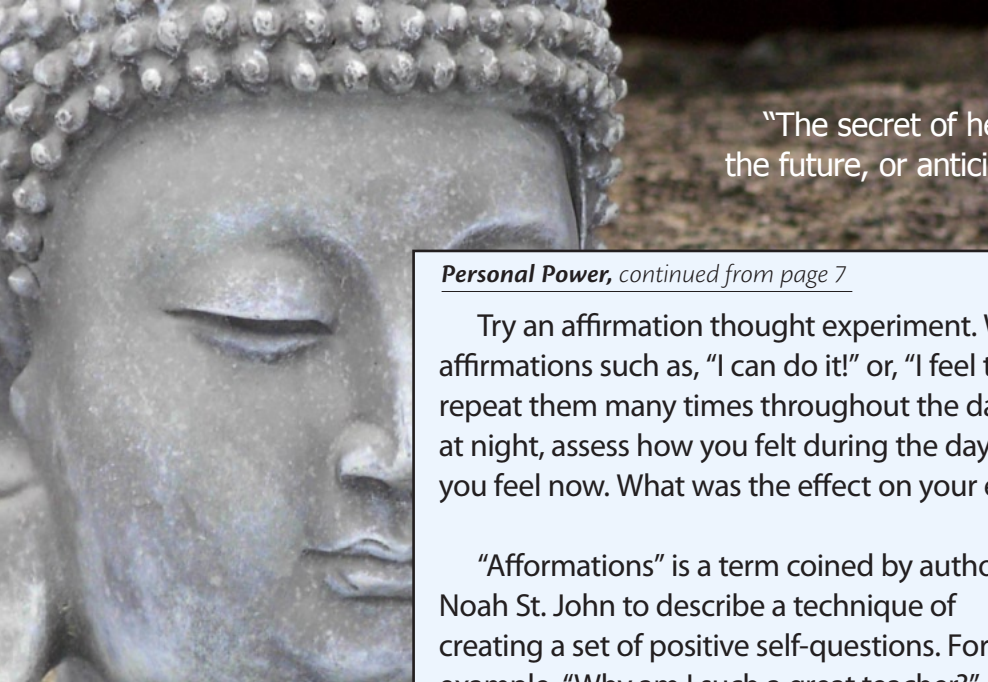Here are three practical methods of increasing or recharging personal power reserves:

Affirmations are positive thoughts patterns describing a condition, feeling, or outcome that you are working to create. Consciously repeating clear, concise, positive statements to yourself does energize the mind, help meet challenges, and boost performance.

> "The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, worry about the future, or anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly."
>
> ~Buddha

Try an affirmation thought experiment. Write several affirmations such as, "I can do it!" or, "I feel terrific!" and repeat them many times throughout the day. Then at night, assess how you felt during the day and how you feel now. What was the effect on your energy?

"Afformations" is a term coined by author Noah St. John to describe a technique of creating a set of positive self-questions. For example, "Why am I such a great teacher?"

St. John contends in his book *The Secret Code of Success* that the mind loves questions and will instantly go to work to answer any question put to it. As the mind creates answers to why you are a great teacher, you will find your energy level and self-confidence is instantly on the rise.

Meditation is also a powerful technique for increasing your energy level. Many forms and practices of meditation have been created over the centuries, making it too broad a subject for this short article. However, one excellent introduction to the subject is *Coming to Our Senses*, by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

A reading of the first couple of chapters of his book is a great help in understanding the fundamental benefits and practices of meditation. Certainly one

benefit is a relaxation and rejuvenation needed to operate today with healthy personal power levels.

Recognizing the mind-body connection is also crucial. Exercise has a powerful effect on levels of confidence and ability to deal with stress. I've learned the hard way that time for exercise and relaxation simply cannot be dismissed, no matter how pressing a crisis.

Finally, adhering to a common-sense life routine of exercise, adequate sleep, and nourishing foods is a very effective way to power up and fight the blahs. Whatever method you choose, you and your students can benefit from moving the need for personal power upkeep from a "good idea" to an everyday practice.

When you maintain a supply of mental fuel for taking charge, accepting the challenge of change, and leading your students, you'll be a high-impact, win-win instructor who can proudly say, "I have the personal power needed to embark on the teaching for success, high-impact adventure of change, higher performance and teaching enjoyment through outcome achievement!

ADVENTURE PREP

Section 2: Expedition Outfitting and You

Every trip requires giving at least some thought to matching the expected travel needs to the available supplies, maps, and knowledge of the local language and customs.

The Six Critical Success Roles of the Win-Win, High Impact Teacher

6. Evaluator
- Question Selector
- Test Monitor
- Scorer
- Standardizer
- Result Recorder
- Statistician

1. Leader
- "Goal Setter"
- Director
- Motivator
- Example Maker
- Progress Checker

5. Communicator
- Message Optimizer
- Media Selector
- Meaning Translator
- Illustrator
- Storyteller

2. Manager
- Organizer
- Scheduler
- Barrier Breaker
- Problem Solver
- Mediator
- Counselor

(PIE-R³) Win-Win, High Impact Instruction
- Prepare
- Input
- Explore
- Retain
- Reconfirm
- Reflect

4. Analyzer
- Venue Adapter
- Instructional Modifier
- Content Checker
- Culture Refiner
- Learning Sequencer
- Knowledge Linker

3. Instructor

The TFS "adventure" map lists the critical teaching roles and role-tasks of the High-Impact Teacher.

Three Easy Pieces of High-Impact Teaching

1. Adventure Prep

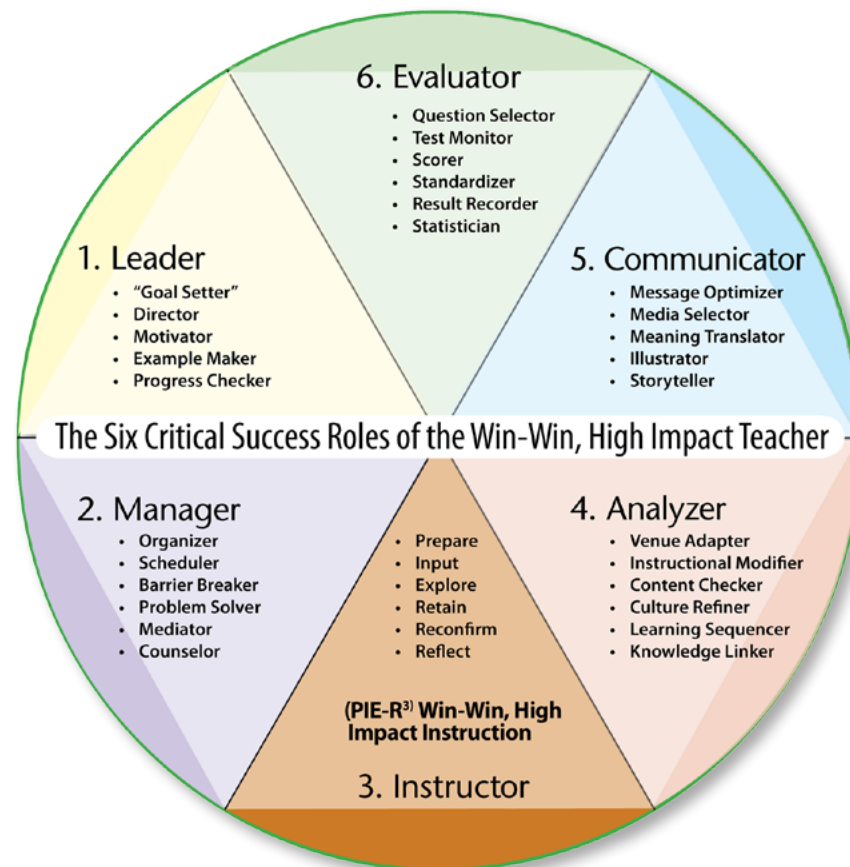▶ 2. Expedition Outfitting

3. Trek Improvement

Three Easy Pieces of Teaching Improvement

If you have the sense that teaching is an adventure, a metaphorical journey through sometimes new and unfamiliar bodies of knowledge, a trek involving the acquisition of new skills and attitudes, then you may agree with TFS that it makes good sense to put enough effort into preparation and planning to ensure a successful and safe trip.

To help you prepare for your teaching expedition, we are introducing here the Second Piece of the Teaching For Success, "Three Pieces of Win-Win, High-Impact Teaching" program and e-zine. The essential point of this is to show you that teaching involves much more than the act of instructing.

When you teach, you actually wear up to six important hats and constantly juggle the roles you play. The map to the left is meant to be a starting point to illustrate this idea and promote discussion in Teaching For Success.

It's included here as a thinking-about-teaching aid and as an advance organizer for articles and ideas to aid your teaching journey and successful fulfillment of these roles. The "TFS Role" chart helps clarify all the many activities that encompass good teaching. This chart can be used as a road map to embarking on a Teaching For Success voyage of improvement and self-discovery.

Scout Reports

We name articles about "outfitting" the teaching and learning journey "Scout Reports" from our Partner Authors.

EXPEDITION OUTFITTING

Must-know Online Learning Success Factors

Barbara J. Weiner, MT (ASCP, FL BCLP), CLS (NCA)

Partner Editor for DL and Web Evaluation, TFS

barbjweiner@AOL.com

Throughout its short history, distance learning has witnessed significant changes almost weekly. Study after study, and report after report, keeps us informed as to the primary characteristics common to all online learners and instructors alike.

Scout Report Summary, 20.1.1

by Barbara J. Weiner

* Online Success Factors
The most important variable useful for comparison in online audience analysis are student study habits.

Such behaviors as procrastination, off-subject Web browsing patterns and the student's ability to independently navigate their online experience are crucial. Positive tendencies in these areas affect course outcomes in direct proportion.

Although definitive learning outcomes are still very hard to predict quantitatively, all current studies agree that successful online learning outcomes are clearly dependent on simple factors common to all cyber-learning delivery systems. Statistical results are now traditionally reported regardless of institutional size, socio-economic status or gender, as those are long-time proven non-factors in online course outcome analysis.

Student Variables

The most important variable useful for comparison in online audience analysis are student study habits. Such behaviors as procrastination, off-subject Web browsing patterns and the student's ability to independently navigate their online experience are crucial.

Positive tendencies in these areas affect course outcomes in direct proportion. (Lim & Yoon, 2006). Good study habits equal more learning. Students with the ability to self-direct their online performance have higher personal educational standards and the most fulfilled future expectations, as well.

They are clearly the students with the highest outcomes in the cyber learning environment. According to University of

EXPEDITION OUTFITTING

Florida distance learning recruiter Rebecca Nelson, "…any student who is enrolling in an online curriculum (especially one that is only online) is generally much more practical and focused than a traditional on-campus student. First, online classes tend to be more expensive, so online students value their curriculum more. Also, to be a successful online student, one has to be very self-motivated, so those students are going to have more focus and study harder or conversely self-select when they start to do poorly into a different program."(personal communication, November 3, 2008).

## Instructor Opportunities and Responsibilities

The sky is the limit for any educator lucky and passionate enough to be delivering a course online now. With today's Angel and Blackboard course delivery technologies, data travelers and electronic textbook downloads, mastery of technology and imagination are the instructor's two top keys to successful course outcome.

Collegiate facilitators delivering a course or courses on the Internet have several serious responsibilities though, including incorporating preparation and technological expertise as the two most important in each class.

The development of a strong cyber classroom persona as well as delivering clear online management skills are necessary for online outcome success, and also serve to bolster online student retention rates. Instructors must clearly demand learning and end restlessness.

Through such activities as live online chats, solid course workload, group case study assignments and off-site learning supported activities, course outcome is secured. For example, most medical students and upper-level biology students are currently using digital imaging, animation technology and synoptic report formatting to assure that learning skills of future physicians and researchers more directly impact both patient care and learning.

Wouldn't you rather have an MD with the cyber knowledge of how to view an entire specimen slide all at once, rather than having to read a few written words for your diagnosis and treatment? Instructors in these situations are now typically reporting improved course outcomes when using these aides that naturally enhance the excitement in their virtual classrooms. (Fisk, 2008).
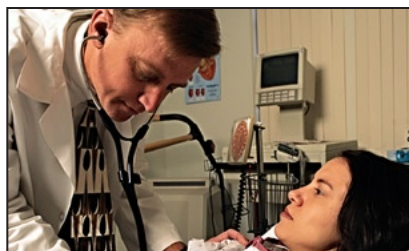
Online Success Factors: *continued from page 11*

Two-fold Assessment

The evaluation of online learning outcomes and modalities is always two-fold, assessing from both the student and the facilitator perspectives every time.

From both sides of the coin, forward thinking always guarantees a successful end result. Instructors and cyber students will all benefit from the leading edge work done at the number one online resource for distance learning participants, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's MIT OpenCourseWare (OCW) program at http://ocw.mit.edu.

There you will find everything from Biomedical Imaging to Protein Folding Problems to The Film Experience, with all course material available for free usage and without copyright restriction. Visitors from every country on the globe have peeked-in on the MIT OCW site, averaging more than one million visits each month!

Works Cited

Fisk, G., (2008). *Using Animation in Forensic Pathology and Science Education. LabMedicine*, 30, 587-592.

Lim, D., & Yoon, S. (2006, Winter). Combined Effect of Instructional and Learner Variables on Course Outcomes within An Online Learning Environment. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, 5, 255-269.

So, if you are an instructor struggling for new ideas to implement, or a virtual student confused in Chemistry 101, get out there and study with the best to insure your own positive online course outcomes.

To Quit or Not to Quit?

Part of any adventure is knowing when to quit and when to go on.

Seth Godin, *The Dip* poses three questions to those on the verge of quitting to carefully consider:
- *Am I panicking?*
- *Who am I trying to influence* [or what am I trying to accomplish]*?*
- *What sort of measurable progress am I making?*

His book recommends that we look past the panic to the fundamental issue, am I moving forward, stuck, or falling back and why? Am I just uncomfortable, tired, worn out or is quitting the smart decision? His best point, the dip is unavoidable so always determine your quitting point before you start!
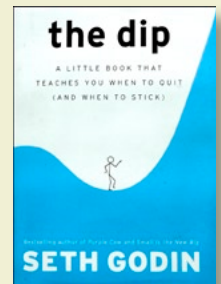
"Why Learn This? It's Useless!"

Ted Rachofsky
Austin Community College
Austin, Texas

The first day I saw Ben, it was like looking in a mirror. Here I was hobbling towards my developmental math classroom, cane in my left hand and briefcase in the other. A fractured hip and pelvis caused by a bicycle accident were my reasons for limping.

Approaching me was Ben, cane in his right hand and briefcase in the other. His injuries were similar, the difference being that the bike he was riding was a Harley Davidson motorcycle.

Although we started out on common ground, our relationship would make the semester one of my hardest ever, and I would have to wait months before we could see eye to eye again.

Scout Report
Summary 20.1.2
This is useless!

It frequently takes patience and one-on-one teaching to change this student mindset. In the frontier report, Ted Rachofsky shares with you the rest of his story about high-impact teaching in the wilds of developmental mathematics.

The battle lines were drawn the first day of class. "Ted, I'm a master electrician and I can figure out everything I need to know without those crazy x's."

My first thought: Another smart student who somewhere in his math training had been terrorized by a math teacher telling him he was incapable of understanding abstract mathematics. Instead of a direct assault like, "Take that attitude outside," I calmly agreed that most people have a lot of problems with concepts using letters instead of concrete numbers, but really, they're doing the same thing. I had eased the tension but I knew I hadn't heard the last of Ben.

> I'm not sure what caused the change. Maybe it was that other students who...

In fact, every time something new was presented that he didn't know, Ben would attack the concept as useless. For example, negative numbers were definitely useless. At other times he'd go to the back of the room, throw his hands up in the air in disgust and spend the rest of the class with his head down on folded arms. I wasn't sure what to do, but I stuffed my anger and replaced it with a false sense of tolerance and calm, hoping things would change for the better.

I'm not sure what caused the change. Maybe it was that other students who started out like Ben were catching on, or it could have been that my office hours were just before class and Ben was always at least a half hour early; consequently, we saw a lot of each other and often talked, sometimes about math. One day

Analysis: What Do Students Really Want?

Sometimes we think we know what our students want in terms of instructional methodologies. But without knowing for sure you can't have a high impact on learning. So why not ask them and be sure you get it right. To find out, list the instructional modes that you are prepared to use such as:

- Lecture.
- Demonstration.
- Student presentations.
- Class discussion with the teacher leading.
- Class discussion with a student leading.
- Small group discussions of assigned work.
- Collaborative group project work.
- Peer review of students' writing.
- Independent online research.

Next, take a vote and tally the results. Star the teaching styles that make it into the top three spots.

Now that you have a better idea of what your students really want in terms of instructional modalities, the question is, are you willing and able to provide your class with their preferred learning activities? If you can make even small accommodations to students needs, they will likely boost retention and increase student satisfaction with your class. And analyzing your students' preferences involves them further in the learning process.
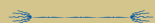
stands out in my memory. It was before class and Ben showed up with a sheaf of papers.

"I've been trying this one problem for three hours. I've looked in the book and nothing helps. It just doesn't make sense." I looked at his work, and except for his last step, everything was okay. I thanked him for coming and showed him his mistake, which was a small calculation error.

"You're kidding me. That's all it is?" was his response.
"Yup," I said.
"Are you here every day?"
"Yes."
"Well, I'm going to be seeing you a lot more with my questions."

Ben kept his promise, and although he had half the semester's work to make up, he almost passed the course. Strangely, I view this failing student as a success, in that Ben is no longer afraid of or angry at math or math teachers. He's also lost his fear of asking questions.

I also consider Ben a success because his actions vindicate two of my teaching postulates: First, that patience is a good policy, and second, that one-on-one teaching is one of the most powerful methods for learning in a teacher's arsenal. Six months later I saw Ben. He told me that he had passed his next math course with flying colors!

EXPEDITION OUTFITTING

A SIDE TRIP

The TFS Active/Passive Learning Analyzer

Determine your activity quotient. Give yourself appropriate credit for similar responses to those provided based on the **PIE-R³** high-impact teaching model based on work done by accelerated learning expert, Colin Rose.

1. **P**repare to Learn
- I start with taking role, returning graded assignments, testing or distributing handouts.   1 pt. ____
- I begin by describing the learning goals for this session.   3 pts. ____
- I pose a question, quickly form one-minute discussion dyads or small groups, and begin the class using student-generated ideas.   5 pts. ____

2. **I**nput New Material
- I lecture for the rest of class period.   1 pt. ____
- I lecture for at least 20 minutes supplying students with guided notes that they fill in while listening.   3 pts. ____
- I introduce new learning material in a variety of ways, including a 6-minute mini-lecture, followed by student problem analysis and recommendation task.   5 pts. ____

3. **E**xplore Content
- I present a PowerPoint slide set during each class.   1 pt. ____
- I pose several pivotal questions for class discussion.   3 pts. ____
- I devise a cutting-edge problem and assign students to online search, analyze, evaluate, and recommend a solution to this problem for the next class.   5 pts. ____

4. **R**etain the Information
- I repeat the main points at the end of lecture.   1 pt. ____
- I help students create memory aids.   3 pts. ____
- I task students to create an image or written metaphor that describes the issue, structure, or solution.   5 pts. ____

5. **R**econfirm Understanding
- I give students an end-of-chapter, multiple-choice test, record the scores and continue to the new unit.   1 pt. ____
- I have students devise questions for a review test using small groups in class.   3 pts. ____
- I chunk the unit under study into brief topics and assign each student a one-minute, in-class presentation on the most important ideas of each topic.   5 pts. ____

6. **R**eflect on Learning
- I wrap up what we have learned in a brief talk before we start the new unit.   1 pt. ____
- I give each student a 3 x 5 card and ask then to state what idea impacted them most about this unit.   3 pts. ____
- In small groups students discuss the most important idea they learned and how they feel the learning of this unit could be improved for the next.   5 pts. ____

Total your PIE-R³ Active Learning Score: _____

- Congratulations on creating a high-impact, active learning class!   26 to 30 pts.
- A great start to adding activity; keep improving!   14 to 25 pts.
- You tend to favor a lower active teaching style.   6 to 13 pts.

EXPEDITION OUTFITTING

Scout Report, 20.1.3 Summary

Find Your Thinking Style

Thinking for a Change by Dr. John Maxwell, concentrates on effective thinking and breaks the methods of thinking down into understandable components.

Effective thinkers are willing to move into uncharted territory.

They learn something beneficial from each and every experience and people they meet. Distorted thinking leads to wrong conclusions and stunted academic growth.

This article gives you detailed examples of both modes of thinking. An excellent reference for your next class discussion and learning by thinking about thinking.

Twenty-six Styles Help Your Students Learn about Thinking

Rick Sheridan
Assistant Professor
Wilberforce University
Wilberforce, Ohio

Learning is about honing and refining one's thinking process. *Thinking for a Change* by Dr. John Maxwell, concentrates on effective thinking and breaks the methods of thinking down into understandable components, such as big picture thinking, creative thinking, realistic thinking, along with strategic, reflective, possibility, collaborative and bottom-line thinking.

As a contrast, the *Bilateral Course* by Peter Shepherd focuses on ineffective thinking. Some of the categories here include: tunnel vision, black-and-white thinking, generalization, assumption, projecting, emotional reasoning, manipulation and mind wandering.

First let's look at Maxwell's *Effective Thinking* components:

* Big Picture

To see the world beyond your own immediate pressing demands and requirements. To see the broader perspective and take a top-down view of the world rather than getting caught up in the demands and emotions of the present moment. To stay on target—rather than bouncing from one objective to another all the time. Effective thinkers are willing to move into uncharted territory. They learn something beneficial from each and every experience and people they meet.

* Tightly focused

Focused thinkers concentrate on the major issue and ignore all distractions. They concentrate on areas of their life where they have the most potential to add value. They set aside blocks of uninterrupted time for focused thought. They regularly question their progress, and are willing to give up many of the things they love in order to focus on where you can make the greatest impact.

* Creative

Creative thinkers initiate new and original ideas and options. They celebrate the unusual; they try new things. They enjoy making connections and forming a new combination. They don't fear failure; they ask loads of questions—about why things are done a certain way, what underlying problems are being addressed and whether there aren't better approaches that can be morphed in from other fields. They seek an environment where creativity is appreciated and encouraged.

EXPEDITION OUTFITTING
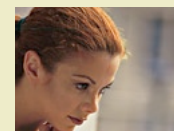
* Realistic thinking

This helps to minimize the downside risk—by encouraging you to be realistic about what the worst-case scenario would mean, and prepare just in case. This encourages the selection of a target and a game plan. Realistic thinking gives you an appreciation for the facts and helps you think through the pros and cons of a decision.

* Strategic thinking

Strategic thinking helps to simplify the difficult and forces you to break down complex issues. It is a prompt to ask the right questions and identify the real issues. Know exactly what resources you have available and develop a plan that starts with the obvious first before attempting the more complex challenges—as that will build momentum and intensity in a sustainable manner. Make certain each time your strategy is updated, it becomes better.

* Possibility thinking

This means to think about things that are not presently possible or that have never before been attempted. Stop focusing on the impossibilities—and start thinking about what's right. Always dream one size bigger than you normally do—and then find ways to achieve your audacious goals. Stretching goals like this will help you believe in even greater possibilities in the future. Look for possibilities in every situation.

* Reflective thinking

This means to ponder and evaluate what you're doing. Society moves at a rapid pace and few people take the time to reflect on what they do or how their life is going. Reflective thinking gives true perspective—it helps separate the trivial from the important. It brings the big picture into focus – and helps you put ideas and experiences into context. It helps you turn your experiences into valuable insights. Ultimately, reflective thinking gives perspective within context; it allows the person to continually connect with their journey; and it provides future direction.

Always question popular thinking

Many people don't want to bother doing their own thinking—and therefore they just blindly follow everyone else. If you do this, you hope everyone else is right. Popular thinking tends to focus on false hopes—like quick fixes, it is slow to embrace change and is biased towards the status quo. At best, popular thinking can produce only mediocre or average results.

* Encourage the input of others

Good thinkers value highly the ideas of people who can make a meaningful contribution. To accomplish more, integrate the ideas and input of others. You can reach effective conclusions faster because you are harnessing the creative input of several perspectives.
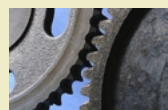
EXPEDITION OUTFITTING

* Collaborative thinking

This is unselfish thinking. Instead of focusing on your own problems and challenges, you help others excel. Regularly check your motives—and fight your natural tendency to put your own interests first. Invest in people around you. Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity.

* Bottom-line thinking

This isn't purely financial. It means to look at your objectives and then to evaluate whether or not you're delivering on what you promise. To benchmark your activities to see whether or not you're doing what you set out to do.

* Changed thinking

Changed thinking is never automatic. Instead, it will demand effort and work over an extended period of time before the new pattern of thinking becomes established. Changed thinking is difficult. The only people who believe thinking is easy are those who never try to guide their thoughts. Changed thinking is worth the investment of time and effort.

Part 2. Distorted Thinking Compared

Next, compare effective thinking with contrasting styles summarized below from the *Bilateral Course* by Peter Shepherd. [Editor's note: these pages would make an excellent handout and thinking analysis worksheet to enhance student discussions.]

* Tunnel vision

To be stuck in a mental groove. You look for that which confirms your fear or prejudice, remember it from the past and expect it in the future. You ignore other points of view or the possibility of alternative solutions, because you find they're always boring.

* Black & white thinking

"You're either for me or against me". Things are black or white, wonderful or terrible, a great success or a total failure, there is no middle ground, no room for improvement, no room for mistakes. Judgments on self and others swing from one emotional extreme to another and are easily triggered. It is important to remember that human beings are just too complex and that all qualities fall somewhere along a continuum, containing elements of either extreme.

* Generalization

"I'll never be any good at tennis" he says after one poor game. In this distortion a broad, generalized conclusion is made and often couched in the form of absolute statement based on a single piece of evidence. If something bad happens once, you expect it to happen over and over again. This inevitably leads to a more and more restricted life and your view of the world becomes stereotyped. The danger here, as with other categories, is that generalizations may become self-fulfilling prophecies.

EXPEDITION OUTFITTING

* Assumption

Making an assumption, presupposes knowledge that you do not have. Assumptions are often popular beliefs that have been adopted without examining their basis in fact, such as "I'm over the hill now that I'm forty."

* Projection

Making false assumptions about what other people think depends on a process called projection. It is like mind-reading—putting words into peoples' mouths. You imagine that people feel the same way you do and react to things the same way. If someone gets angry because you are late, you assume that they will never like or respect you again.

* Negative thinking

"We haven't seen each other for two days—I think the relationship is falling apart," she says. Predicting negative consequences is a defense, to protect oneself from disappointment by expecting the worst. Instead consider, the realistic odds of the negative situation really happening.

* Self-consciousness

This is the introverted tendency to relate everything around you to yourself, to think people must be judging you, or to think that everything they do or say is a reaction to something about you. It is the habit of continually comparing yourself to other people, based on the underlying assumption is that your worth is questionable.

* Blame

In some way we are responsible for nearly everything that happens to us, including our distress and unhappiness. Taking responsibility means accepting the consequences of your own choices. Ask yourself: "What choices have I made that resulted in this situation? What decisions can I now make to change it?" If you see yourself as externally controlled, you see yourself as helpless, a victim of fate. Someone else is always to blame and is responsible for the pain, loss, or failure.

* Unfairness

Life is often not fair and to insist that it always should be can result in distorted thinking with a feeling of ever-growing resentment. Say what you want or prefer, without getting involved in the fallacy of unfairness.

* Emotional reasoning

"I feel depressed; life must be pointless." You automatically believe that what you feel must be true—no critical thinking skills here. If you feel guilty then you must have done something wrong. If you feel angry, someone must have taken advantage of you. However, there is nothing innately true about what you feel—your feelings can lie, they can be based on misconceptions. If feelings are based on distorted thoughts, they won't have any validity.

EXPEDITION OUTFITTING

* Manipulation

"If I were more appreciated, I'd be more affectionate", he says. But, the only person you can really control or change is yourself. When you pressure people to change, you are forcing them to be different for your own benefit.

Strategies for manipulating others include blaming, demanding, withholding and trading in order to make the other feel obliged. This often results in resentment on their part.

* Shoulds

"You should never ask people personal questions," he says. In this distortion, one operates from a list of inflexible rules about how people should act. You consider any particular deviation from your rules, values, or standards is bad. As a result you are often in the position of judging and finding fault. Realize that your rules are not necessarily the "right rules."

* Got to be right

"I've been doing this lot longer than you, so I know what I'm talking about," she argued. In this distortion you are usually on the defensive, needing to prove to yourself and others that your views, assumptions and actions are all correct. Your opinions rarely change because, if the facts don't fit what you already believe, you ignore them.

* Heaven's reward

This distorted thinking style accepts pain and unhappiness because of a hoped for bargain, "Those who do good are rewarded in the end." You expect all your sacrifice and self-denial to pay off, and you feel hostile and bitter when the reward doesn't come. Heaven is a long way off and you can get very tired waiting.

* Mind wandering
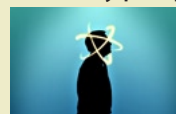
Many people rarely live in the present moment, allowing their minds to wander from various past events or future worries. This leads to unfocused thinking and can cause your emotional state to continually fluctuate.

References:

Maxwell, John. *Thinking for a Change, 11 Ways Highly Successful People Approach Life and Work* New York, Center Street Publishers, 2003.

Peter Shepherd. *Bilateral Course* Available: <http://www.trans4mind.com/metercourse/Bilateral_8.html> (Accessed September 2008)

Note: Rick Sheridan is an assistant professor of Communications at Wilberforce University in Ohio, and he has also lectured at California State University, Chico, and Stanford University.

On the Goal of Education…

Those who know how to think need no teachers.
~ Mahatma Gandhi

WebQuest: Finding Instructional Gold

If you don't know WebQuest.org, and you're stressing out about how to add more active, prepared, and ready-to-use learning projects to your course, then a visit to WebQuest.org should be your next travel stop.

WebQuest is well known among K-12 teachers, but unknown in some higher education circles. Don't let the K-12 focus turn you off before doing at least one search for offerings in your subject area. By the way, WebQuests are free. Pull up the WebQuest home page at <http://www.webquest.org/index.php> to read the overview. The service is summarized as follows: "WebQuests originated at the San Diego State University Department of Educational Technology. A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web."

It's easy to search for a WebQuest project suitable for your class. There are three powerful search engines to use. To select the search type that make most sense for you, click the "Find WebQuests" link or go to: <http://www.webquest.org/search/index.php>. There are thousands of WebQuest activities that teachers have submitted over the years. These projects can be used as written, or modified to suit the specific needs of your subject or students. Go WebQuest and add effective online discovery learning to your class!

A Diamond Found in the "YouTube" Kingdom of Video Mania

Have you discovered, "Did You Know?" Actually, there are many "Did You Know" video presentations out on YouTube. The particular clip that I like for using with students, especially ones who challenge the instructor to engage their interest is "**Did You know 2008.**" It's a YouTube housed video that has been viewed more than 1,370,530 times. This high-impact video stunner will spark discussions about globalization and accelerating change.

To review the video presentation, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpEnFwiqdx8>. As you watch, create a list of discussion questions appropriate to your classes' subject and age range.

While at YouTube, you may want to compare the many other versions of "Did You Know" and find the one most compatible with your learning objectives and need for a stimulating side trip for your course.

SIDE TRIP: IN SEARCH OF HUMOR

Dabby's Teaching World

Picasso said: "Every act of creation is first of all an act of destruction."

I knew teaching might be tougher than I thought, but this is ridiculous!

Penny © 2009

Trek Improvement: Section III: Success Through Action

SECT III:

TREK IMPROVEMENT

Even the best-prepared expeditions run into unexpected trouble that sometimes requires on-the-spot creative thinking and inventive strategies.

The new Teaching For Success High-Impact program recognizes the need for an interactive idea-application section.

Therefore, we provide a workbook-like third piece that includes question/response fill-ins, plus bits and pieces of useful information that you can use to better plan and solve teaching and learning problems that you encounter.

This section has been made Adobe Reader field-active so that you can enter your ideas and responses, and save and print them as needed.

In "Trek Improvement" you will find help in planning at the various levels you are likely to deal with each term:

- ✔ Session
- ✔ Module
- ✔ Course
- ✔ Global Outcomes
- ✔ On-the-Road Problem Solving

Also, to help you solve problems, we will provide information in the **Trek Improvement Section** III that focuses on:

- ✔ Solving Day-to-day Travel Problems
- ✔ Avoiding Detours [What Not to Do]
- ✔ First Aid for Emergencies [What to Do When Things Go Wrong]
- ✔ Keeping Your Travelers Together [Retention]
- ✔ Getting Through Customs — or, "There Is a Price to Pay for Good Results."
- ✔ Setting Performance Benchmarks
- ✔ Evaluating the End Results
- ✔ Incorporating Improvement Changes into the Next Adventure

Of course, there is not room for all of these topics in one issue, so look for them to be addressed over the course of several volumes.

Attention Faculty Authors

Would you like to be published?

TFS needs your teaching improvement ideas, tips, improvement stories and web resource recommendations. Be a TFS "Scout" and help survey the land ahead for opportunities to improve teaching and learning. For more author submisison details visit http://www.teachingforsuccess.com/author-info.html.

What did you learn from your last vacation trip? I'm willing to bet you picked up a number of practical tips on how to travel more easily and avoid frustrating mistakes that cost you time, enjoyment, and money.

But having learned, will you incorporate changes into your next trip or be content to make the same mistakes over and over again? Of course, being an intelligent person, you probably take action and make improvements to make the next trip more enjoyable and rewarding. It's the same idea. Teaching is an adventure and through the application of new learning, you and your students will enjoy greater satisfaction and reward from the educational effort.

The Three A's of Improvement: Affirmation, Analysis and Action

You can read all the books and periodicals, watch videos, participate in seminars, webinars, and take traditional courses on teaching improvement, but unless you apply what you learned from these sources, you've wasted your time. You must make an affirmation to experiment with new ideas everyday.

Next, analyze the ideas presented in each Teaching For Success Issue for the conceptual teaching gems that catch your attention. What is it about the idea that seems relevant to your teaching? What are the pieces that you can modify or directly use in your classroom or online class?

The TFS Trek Improvement section is designed to make improvement action steps easier and faster for you.

Adobe Acrobat Reader is recommended for working with this section as it will allow you to save and print your comments as needed.

As you read an article, and the ideas start to germinate, capture them immediately in the spaces below. Enter snippets or complete thoughts however you like to work. The important thing is to make a commitment to improve your class each and every session.

After you make a change, canvas your students with a quick survey to capture their assessment of how the improvement worked. You can use one-minute verbal or written feedback questions on note cards, e-mail, twitter or any convenient mode of communication.

The important thing is to make improvement a partnership effort. Make it a game, a challenge to see how much the class can learn, how fast they can earn it, and how well can they put the new knowledge to use.

Now, let's look at the Big Ideas in this issue and get you started formulating some specific improvement ideas that you can try for the benefit of your students.

Big Idea 1. "High-impact Teaching," pp. 2-4

What is "High-impact Teaching"?

_____
_____
_____

How Do You Define Success?

_____
_____
_____

What are the three metaphorical parts of the Teaching For Success High-impact program?

_____
_____
_____

Describe the "essential why" you teach.

_____
_____
_____

Big Idea 2. "Power Shortage," pp. 5-8

What are the three steps that you can take to maintain your Personal Power level?

_____
_____
_____

According to Seth Godin, who is entitled to become a leader?

_____
_____
_____

What are three ways to recharge personal power?

_____
_____
_____

Which recharge method will you try this week?

_____
_____
_____

Big Idea 3. "Expedition Outfitting Overview," p. 9

Good maps are important to the success of any expedition; can you list the Six Critical Success Roles of High-impact Teaching?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SECT III:

TREK IMPROVEMENT

Big Idea 4, "Must-know Learning Success Factors, pp. 10-12

If student study habits prove to be the top success factor in online learning, how can you help your students to improve in this area? List one or two ideas.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Big Idea 5, "Why Learn This? It's Useless!" pp. 13-14

How did author Ted Rachofsky work with a very difficult student who voiced the familiar complaint: "Why do I have to learn this?"

_____

_____

_____

_____

Quick Idea 1: What Do Students Really Want? p. 14

Do you know what teaching method your students really want? If you do, list their preferences here. If not, enter a way to find out.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Big Idea 6, "Twenty-six Styles Help Students Think" pp. 16-20

List several ways that you could use the thinking styles defined in this article to spark learning about how we think more effectively and avoid resorting to distortions.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Quick Idea 2. WebQuest.org, p.21

Go to WebQuest.org and perform a search for prepared projects that would augment your class activities. List the projects here:

_____

_____

_____

Quick Idea 3. "Did You Know?" Video, p. 21

List several ways you could use this video to engage hard-to-reach students in global change and issues that will influence their work life.

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECT III:

TREK IMPROVEMENT

In Performance Improvement Circles, Goal Setting is King.

My personal high-impact teaching improvement goal for this issue is:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Two Very Effective Improvement Questions to Make Your Day

If you really want to improve your teaching performance, answer these two questions after each and every class and record the results. What did I do right this time?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What can I do better next time?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Until the next issue, have the best weeks teaching ever! Your comments regarding TFS are most welcome. TFS is always evolving, learning, and improving, too. I look forward to hearing from you to keep us on track.

Just in: Class discussion starter, "Stand by Me" composite world video--very cool. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us-TVg40ExM> 10 million views and counting! Analyze the creative thought, outstanding execution, and technical knowledge needed to pull off this project.

Join the TFS Wiki for More Ideas

You are invited to join the free TFS Learning Community Wiki at <http://teachingforsucccess.wetpaint.com>. There you will find 44 members who have already joined, other faculty, administrators, faculty developers, and a host of interested people whose passion it is to improve teaching and learning. Please feel free to ask a question, post a thread, or contribute a favorite photo or video clip.

TFS Publisher,
Jack H. Shrawder

Success is never final. Failure is never fatal.
Courage is what counts.

-Sir Winston Churchill