

Teaching For Success

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Execution: Getting Things Done

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The Great Unaddressed Issue

Jack H. Shrawder
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“Execution is the great unaddressed issue in the business world today,” observes Larry Bossidy in *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*.

I may be off base, but couldn't the same be said for education as a whole, and higher education in particular?

It's not enough to have creative ideas, perfect critical-thinking skills, and bold visions; instructors and students have to execute and get learning tasks done. Practically speaking, this means we have to reach specific, desired learning outcomes within the time constraints of a college term.

Also, it means building quick bridges to learners, understanding their needs, diagnosing learning difficulties, providing a range of active learning options, issuing concise, insightful performance feedback and continuously evaluating the performance of our students and ourselves. And finally, we must find ways to teach that retain students at higher levels than a paltry 50 percent.

Businesses comprised of people who can execute well successfully compete and flourish even in tough markets.

Schools comprised of administrators, faculty, staff, and students who have mastered the art of getting things done are the ones with reputations for teaching excellence, the ones that can compete even with online mega-institutions, and whose graduates are hot commodities in the job market.

Larry Bossidy reveals the true nature of execution when he writes, “Execution is not just something that does or doesn't get done. Execution is a specific set of behaviors and techniques that companies need to master in order to have competitive advantage. It is a discipline of its own.”

If you're thinking, education is not competitive; I don't have to worry about this; think again.

News reports say colleges and universities are just discovering marketing as competition for students heats up. Execution is about seeing reality, and competition for students is real.

Every student you retain in your class adds to the total success of your institution. Retention rates of more than 90 percent are possible—just ask Mary Gross of Mira Costa College, interviewed on page 5. ✨

Instructional Design Idea

**Quick
Tip**



*Third Place, QuickTip
Super Ideas
Contest Winner*

Advertisements Teach Audience

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In order to teach the concept of audience to my writing classes, I have students bring one or two of their favorite magazines to class. From those magazines, students select four different advertisements.

For each advertisement, students analyze, discuss, and then write about the following items:

- ☐ Product being advertised
- ☐ People characteristics portrayed in the ad (male, female, macho, sexy, sports stars, celebrities, etc.)
- ☐ Body language of person or persons in the advertisements
- ☐ Language analysis, grammar, word usage, etc.
- ☐ Underlying message, tone, or attitude conveyed

As a prelude to the writing part of the assignment, I ask students to name the magazine and one of the advertisements they have chosen; when questioned, it's interesting to note that the ads they select first are for products they already own or desire to own—which points out

that the advertisers have already reached one part of their target market.

In addition, students learn that the advertisements connect with specific audiences, evoke emotions, engender feelings of brand loyalty, help readers identify with the product, and sometimes promote a lifestyle. In some cases, brand recognition is all that is needed to effectively sell the product.

Students then write a memo describing their advertisements and analyzing how the advertisers have approached their respective audiences; the other point made is that only certain products appear in certain types of publications.

It takes a good deal of organization and thought for students to articulate in writing all of the marketing and sales concepts and principles used in each ad to reach a specific audience.

The most noticeable aspect of this assignment is the diversity of magazines students use for it. In my typical class, there will be magazines representing a dozen different interests and niche media targeting specific audiences. Such diversity intensifies the value of the assignment.

This project encourages interaction as students share their magazines, discuss the advertisements, and then write about what they have seen; all of this helps promote their understanding of writing for a specific audience in an enjoyable and authentic way. ✨

**Quick
Tip**

How to Improve Idea Execution

Jack H. Shrawder
TFS Publisher



Approaching its eighteenth birthday, Teaching For Success is an idea that is still growing up. My guess is that it may take twenty-five or more years for it to grow to maturity. Am I surprised? You bet—I once believed the myth that great ideas are those that become instant hits and overnight successes.

Execution is about carrying ideas through to fruition even though the journey is long and difficult. Becoming good at execution is becoming good at the intellectual challenge of taking ideas from vague concept to reality. Here are

some good questions to ask to improve your idea execution.

Since ideas start out as rather broad conceptions, immediately identify the specific, practical components. Then, ponder how these pieces can be translated into a concrete or workable form. Ascertain what proof exists that substantiates the idea's workability. Finally, determine the range of possible outcomes of its implementation and determine how you will know if progress is being made toward realization. ✨

**Quick
Tip**

Leadership and Execution

Jack H. Shrawder
TFS Publisher



How do you improve your ability and your students' ability to get things done in teaching and learning? You can improve by taking several small, routine, but important steps.

First, you have to want to improve your ability to execute, and it has to be more than lip service. You have to build the internal fire necessary to fuel the repetitive actions that are required for success in this discipline and apply them to each and every class meeting. Setting goals or outcomes by yourself is not an option. These goals must be shared with your students so they can buy into the learning process and your leadership. Next, create active, student-involving learning activities. Students thrive on having options, particularly for out-of-class assignments. The goals and learning activities constitute your learning strategy or instructional design.

Next, ensure your communications support your instructional design by confirming your personal interest in the success of each of your students. Constructive instructor-to-student and student-to-instructor performance feedback is crucial and must be nurtured. Finally, reflect on your actions and make changes as needed. ✨



*Third Place, Super
Idea, Super Ideas
Contest Winner*

Quiz Bowl Sparks Competitive Review

Jacqueline Elowsky
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Your three-hour night class starts at 6 p.m.; many of your students come from full-time jobs and are full-time parents. Your problem: How can you keep students interested, interactive, and awake while learning the concepts required for the course?

The answer: the Quiz Bowl.

The Quiz Bowl is an interactive, competitive learning game that meets classroom teaching and management goals by promoting:

- ☐ Incentives to read the textbook
- ☐ Class participation
- ☐ Development of an exam study guide
- ☐ Teamwork
- ☐ Fun with learning

Quiz Bowl can be used for any class, either as a one-time activity or a weekly project throughout the semester.

Activity Setup

For a semester-long project, start by dividing the class into five teams of three to six students, depending on the size of the class. These teams will stay the same

throughout the semester. Have each team create its own name to submit to you along with the team members' names. Each class period, have the teams sit in the same area of the room during Quiz Bowl.

Then, each week, write ten to twelve questions based on the chapter(s) of assigned textbook reading. To lighten up the session and add an extra helping of fun to the competition, throw in two or three trivia questions from outside the text but are related to the subject matter.

Session Procedures and Scoring

At the beginning of each class, write the team names across the top of the black/white board in the front of the room. Begin by asking a question and allowing students to write the question on a blank sheet of paper. All teams then have 30 seconds to deliberate quietly on an answer. When the time is up, turn to the first team for a response. If this team answers correctly, it receives one point on the board. If it answers incorrectly, the question moves to the next team clockwise, and so on.

If a team answers the question correctly, that team gets one point. Each team gets only one chance to answer a question and only the initial 30 seconds to deliberate. The trivia questions are also worth one point each, but students will not be responsible for these on an exam. Keep questions brief. Questions that

require specific one-word or one-term answers work best.

To avoid confusion, allow only one person from a team to be the spokesperson when answering a question. No matter which team gets a correct answer, each new question starts with the next team in the initial rotation. For example, the first week team 1 gets first crack at question 1, team 2 starts question 2, etc. In week two, team 2 gets to answer question 1 first and team 3 starts question 2, etc.

Add each week's scores to the previous weeks' until the end of the semester. Assigning extra credit points for the winning team—or all the teams—is best for motivating participation.

For One-time Use

For a one-time activity, Quiz Bowl can be used the week before an exam. Assign each student a chapter in the textbook. Have the students write one question from that chapter that they believe is important and hand it in with their name on it.

Divide the class into teams then follow the Quiz Bowl format. However, for this game announce whose question



When the time is up, turn to team 1 for a response. If this team answers correctly, it receives one point on the board. If it answers incorrectly, the question moves to the next team.

is being asked, so that student will sit out for that question.

In both the one-time and semester-long versions, each student will end up with a list of questions and answers to use as a study guide when exam time comes. They will also have had the chance to get to know each other and learn team-building skills.

As questions are answered during Quiz Bowl, you can gauge student knowledge and understanding of concepts, and interject explanations before going on to the next question.

This tactic allows for brief discussion on topics that can be expanded upon later, if needed, in a more in-depth lecture format. Quiz Bowl is a teaching tool that can be a fun way to motivate students and make classes more engaging.

Customize the game to suit your needs, and it will benefit you and your students by making learning more active. ✨

Instructional Design

Some Teach by Solving Problems: I Create Them

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Making problems for students does not sound like a way to be a positive influence on them. However, in the correct setting, problems provide valuable ways to teach and reinforce abstract scientific concepts.

The philosophy of problem-based learning (PBL) places students in virtual real-world situations that hone their problem-solving skills using facts and concepts learned in class. You can use small PBL activities after each lecture period or you can use large PBL projects to reiterate major points of a large topic covered over several lectures.

PBL is not an educational fad destined to take the path of the Cretaceous-period dinosaurs. It was developed in the 1970s by McMaster University in Canada to prepare medical students for their clinical studies. The practice worked and became a regular part of medical education. It then made its way into engineering and law programs. Even the Department of Defense developed PBL training for various types of training. However, it went into obscurity like other novel problem-solving



Brian R. Shmaefsky

educational strategies taken on by the mainstream academic programs. John Dewey's discovery-based engagement learning never resurfaced in its pure form after its demise in the late 1960s.

What does PBL look like?

In a PBL classroom faculty take on the role more of facilitator than lecturer. They are there to provide the background and direction students need to tackle the problem. Lectures are important because they provide much of the basic facts and conceptual foundation needed for the problem-solving paradigm. So, in a science class each PBL activity should be prefaced with just enough background for students to understand the topics to be researched in the activity. For example, a lesson on the facts of thermodynamics can provide the framework for an energy-efficient household heating and cooling system problem-solving activity.

On Self-improvement

We don't think ourselves into a new way of acting, we act ourselves into a new way of thinking. ✨

—Larry Bossidy
Execution

Many people who use PBL place the students into teams, as was traditionally done with earlier problem-solving teaching strategies. However, this does not have to be the case with PBL. Projects can be designed for students to work alone, in single-task teams, or in focus groups working on part of a larger problem.

The essence of PBL is getting students to sift through the concepts and facts needed to solve real-life discipline-related problems. Basically, PBL looks like students busily involved in using a variety of resources to gather and evaluate the appropriate facts and concepts needed to resolve a complex issue related to the topic in the curriculum.

PBL Example

This example of PBL was taken from the project “Alien Rescue” being developed by Dr. Susan Pedersen at Texas A&M University at College Station. It engages students in a multitasking activity that asks them to research the environmental conditions needed to

keep a group of alien beings alive on planets in our solar system. It connects critical thinking to concepts in biology, spectroscopy, social sciences, history, and mathematics. The activity flows as follows:

Students are presented with a problem. For example, a spaceship containing a diverse group of aliens need a home in our solar system. Each alien has unique environmental needs.

Students are then asked to research a wealth of facts about the planets and moons in our solar system. They search:

- ☐ Planetary sciences information.
- ☐ Space exploration projects that may provide valuable clues to collecting planetary data.
- ☐ For information about instruments that measure certain environmental conditions.

They are then directed to research any missing information about the environmental conditions of each planet by designing space probes launched to planets they feel have many of the conditions needed for each creature.

However, the students have the following limitations and conditions:

- ☐ The design of the probe must be appropriate for the planet being studied.
- ☐ The probes must be outfitted with the appropriate instruments

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Five-Star Instructor Interview

FSII

Name: Mary Gross
College: Mira Costa College
Years teaching: 18
Teaching specialty: ESL and Developmental English
Contact: mgross@miracosta.edu



What is your teaching and learning success philosophy, and how can an instructor be successful today?

I live by the maxim, “To learn is to teach and to teach is to learn.” And it’s true, I learn every time that I teach. My job is to empower students with knowledge.

Provide the Tools

I provide the students with the tools they need to be successful. Now, over the years, these tools have changed, so I know that I need to always be in touch with what’s happening in my field and with technology.

To be successful, students have to meet the demands of living and working in the information age; therefore, I strive to give my students many opportunities for practice and performance.

I use differentiated instruction to accomplish my goals. Differentiated instruction is an instructional system used to successfully work with a group of students with a broad range of skills:

- ❑ Some are ready to learn the content.
- ❑ Others don’t yet possess foundational skills.
- ❑ Some will need extra work to be challenged.

I’ve learned that my students need a range of learning opportunities that match their skill level; each needs to feel successful in reaching his or her learning objectives.

Many of my ideas are borrowed from Stephen Covey’s *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. I want students to know that by building knowledge, skill, and desire they create better success habits; if they develop successful habits, they can effectively solve problems, maximize opportunities in their lives, and continuously learn and grow.

Through my teaching efforts, I build the knowledge that gives my students skills and the desire to learn beyond the classroom. I want learners to exercise these new skills not only inside but outside the classroom.

As a community college instructor, I have classes made up of very diverse learners, so I need to know clearly my students’ strengths and weaknesses and the course objectives. I ensure these objectives are authentic and meaningful to students.

Reflection and Connection

As good professional teaching practice dictates, I reflect often on the strengths and weaknesses of my teaching skills; I work continuously to improve

these skills and strengthen my areas of weaknesses.

I remember how it was to enter college and be the first in a family to go to college. From that experience, I know that the more I personalize the college experience for my students, the more it will open and pave the way to true success for them. In my book, it’s definitely OK to have high expectations of students and it’s a must to have high self-expectations. But with high expectations comes the need for high connectivity.

I focus a lot of energy on making connections with my students. How do I make connections? When students see me working hard bringing in material and preparing creative, active, and interesting lessons for every class, they are happy and excited to come to class and retention is high.

Here’s a connection-building idea that works for me. I have students brainstorm in groups to create three questions to ask me on the spot. This exercise helps me to become real to them as I answer their questions. When they see right from the first day of class that I have struggled and know how it is to be a student, I build bridges to them.

I share with them that I know students have to be as dedicated to study and learning as I am dedicated to continuous learning about teaching. And I know the day does come when through hard work, you do achieve your goals.

continued on page 7

Try This Trial Balloon

TB

Solved in a Flash

Dave Bequette
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Are you tired of “the dog ate my homework” excuse from your students? Teach them the importance of creating a safe copy of their work on some form of permanent storage device. With the availability of inexpensive flash media you can enjoy the ease of saving large amounts of data quickly and easily. For example, I teach a class in which students often request data files, so I transfer all of my files previously distributed on CD over to a flash drive, making them instantly available. I also save my syllabi and other class handouts to the same media for instant access. ✨

TFS Becomes the First PSP for Faculty

What’s in a Label?

If you have ever created an idea that took on a life of its own, then you can understand what it is like to work on an ever-evolving idea like *Teaching For Success*. It has finally become clear that the best label for TFS is to call it a **Professional Success Program** for faculty. And that sums up perfectly our long-term goal of providing ideas selected to continuously boost your teaching success!

Management: A Critical Success Factor

**Quick
Tip**

Cheating, Tests Your Management Skills

Lynette G. Esposito
Language and Literature Dept.
Burlington County College

You look up from your desk while students take their final exam: shock registers; maybe surprise; and certainly disappointment.

You have discovered a student blatantly copying answers from the textbook during an exam, or other less obvious but suspicious behavior. No matter the scenario, there are management do's and don't's to keep in mind.

First, do make every effort to avoid falsely accusing a student of cheating. Do always approach the student respectfully and never in a group. Do follow your college guidelines on what actions are appropriate in dealing with a cheating.

Remember that what may appear to be cheating might not be. You must determine factually if the student was copying, referencing, or getting answers or information in a way that was not allowed. Ponder for a few moments: Was I clear beyond a reasonable doubt that the directions and policies I gave the students were heard and understood?

Did you put into writing the rules of what could be used or not used to back up your verbal directions? After considering the above and being sure the student was cheating, then do ask the student to privately discuss the matter.

To accuse a student of cheating is a delicate matter and may have liability consequences. Even if the student says it's okay to discuss the issue in front of the class, don't do it. He or she may go to your administrator afterwards and complain that his or her privacy was violated.

Should the student refuse to discuss the issue with you and become disruptive, you have a management test on your hands. You need to know what your options are under school policy and then stick with your decision.

You may decide to allow the student in question to finish the exam and when the exam is over discuss the problem when the room has cleared. Or you may need to call security. By offering different opportunities to the student, and by considering the privacy issue, you are protecting not only the student and yourself, but also your institution.

Bottom line, you must be fully aware of your institution's policies on cheating, the procedure for handling each situation and what disciplinary actions you may take. Don't wait for a situation to happen, plan positive responses now. Do be both fair and sensitive. It can help contain a situation to the classroom. If you don't take action, it's unfair to the honest students. So be a good manager: be prepared. ✨

Five-Star Instructor Interview

FSII

Name: René C. Izquierdo, Ph.D.

College: Miami-Dade Community College

Experience: 17 years at MDC

Teaches: Spanish

Contact: rizquier@mdc.edu

What is your teaching and learning success philosophy?

[Continuing the interview from the August 2005 issue where Dr. Izquierdo explains that...] "it's difficult even for an extraordinary teacher to impart knowledge successfully to such a blended array [referring to the academic skill and preparation levels] of students sharing the same classroom.

This is what I do. From day one, I approach my classes with enthusiasm and with a sense of humor. I know beforehand that I am in that class to impart knowledge to a diverse group of students who have different needs, skills, and goals. I assess their needs

and their skills as a group, and also as individuals: this is every teacher's challenge. I try to instill new lifetime goals to those who are receptive: this is my own particular challenge.

I try to see each of my students as an individual. I show respect for everyone. In the case of the subjects I teach, Spanish and ESL, I remind my students of the benefits beyond the class, the impact that the subject they are studying can have in their lives. For ESL students in the U.S., it is simply a matter of survival. For the student of Spanish in Florida, it can make the difference when applying for that special job.

In order to carry out the teaching and learning mission entrusted to me, I have managed to create a learning environment based on nurturing, sustained by a relaxed atmosphere, and guided by discipline.

I am friendly to my students and take interest in their total academic development, paying attention to personal problems that may hinder their achievement in class. When students are falling behind or miss class, I find out what problems they are facing, and advise them accordingly.

Finally, I reward my students by publishing the best compositions and photos on our departmental website.

To be continued in the October issue

Positive Classroom Discipline

**Quick
Tip**

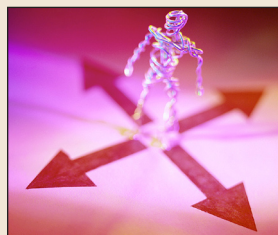
Five Crucial Questions to Answer:

- ✓ What are your disciplinary options?
- ✓ What are your instructor rights and responsibilities?
- ✓ What are your students' rights?
- ✓ What can you do to prevent the most serious confrontations from occurring?
- ✓ How can your students learn about your behavior policies?



Execution and Instructional Design

Jack H. Shrawder
Publisher,
Teaching For Success



Getting things done in the instructional design area of teaching and learning goes to the heart of achieving outcomes. But the question remains how to best accomplish something, and the right something in particular.

First, what gets done is controlled by something or someone. In the age of accountability, written goals or outcomes would appear at the top of most educators' lists of controlling factors. In fact, goal preparation is the first step of a six-step accelerated lesson model that is very helpful to constructing a meaningful and effective lesson.

TFS has adapted a model from work done on accelerated learning by Colin Rose to make it memorable and fit an instructor-led learning environment.

The *PIE R³* model moniker is a takeoff of the well known πr^2 formula for the area of circle. Thus, it becomes easier to remember the following six instructional steps:

- ☐ Preparation
- ☐ Input
- ☐ Explore
- ☐ Retain
- ☐ Reconfirm
- ☐ Reflect

Prepare for learning by setting goals, communicating them to students, and obtaining their buy-in.

Input refers to active and engaging new knowledge presentation.

Learners now need activities and time to *explore* this new knowledge. What are its implications? How does it attach to previous learning? How is it useful? What does it smell, look, feel, sound, or taste like?

Students *retain* more when they make associations, visualize image chains, make lists, practice, and apply the information.

Reconfirm means reviewing and, furthermore, proving that learning has taken place by passing a performance test.

Lastly, both instructor and learner need to *reflect* on the content that has been learned and process by which it was learned for keys to improving it for the next teaching cycle. These are the fundamental teaching and learning steps that will improve execution. ✨

TFS Book of the Month Recommendation

Success is reading
in your field one
hour every day.

The Accelerated Learning Handbook
David Meir

If you feel like there is too much content and not enough time to teach it all in the courses you teach, you may change your mind after reading this book. Accelerated Learning (AL) is not fluff or about dumbing down content. It is about collaborative, performance-focused, and option-rich learning environments. AL has a proven track record of success in business and education. ✨

Reader Feedback

I have been enjoying *TFS* for years and greatly appreciate the straightforward, well-written articles that help teachers teach. In every issue I have gotten at least one small nugget, sometimes even big ideas, that are practical and easy to implement. I appreciate the work your company does... ✨

—Dennis E. Pipper,
Information Technology and Office Systems Department,
Lansing Community College

Mary Gross Five-Star Interview

continued from page 5

How do you use technology to enhance your teaching and student learning?

Technology is so integral to students' lives that it can't be ignored. I see technology as a tool to enhance learning as long as it's used for a specific learning purpose.

My favorites? Email is a very effective way to send positive notes and quick class updates. I also use Web pages. For example, I take digital photos of students during the first class and gather student biographical information to create a web page designed to help students get to know each other quickly. Also, I have used Blackboard and Web CT's virtual classroom as a supplement to my on-ground class. I teach some applications, such as MS Word, in a computer lab where I teach students some of the more useful features such as setting up a header or footer or how to create a Works Cited page in MLA format.

Still, 25 percent of students may have no computer experience, so I have to teach some students how to double-click. This is an example of where differentiated instruction comes in. I tap into my more advanced users as peer tutors for helping those who have very limited abilities. Also, students need to learn the etiquette of Net communications, so I teach that, although sometimes instant messaging hurts with all the abbreviations common to this medium. Still, students need to learn how to send an effective email.

However, I use caution with all these technologies. They can become a total time waster unless I control them and use them as effective teaching and learning tools. You must know why you are using a technology and how to make it effective. Finally, constant evaluation for effectiveness is crucial with the use of all technologies. ✨

To be continued in the October issue

Problem-based Learning

continued from page 4

SI

for measuring the critical environmental conditions the students must assess.

- ❑ There is a limited budget to send out probes.
- ❑ The students must justify to a supervisor the needs and design of the probe.
- ❑ Analysis of the data from the probes and the formulation a plan for placing the aliens on the planets is required.
- ❑ Students are given prompt formative feedback throughout the process.
- ❑ Students are given expeditious summative feedback once their report is filed.

Setting Are Often the Key

This sounds like a very complex scenario. However, it has been field tested on young children and adults and can be done in regular class sessions. Plus, it produces measurable increases in retention and understanding of scientific information.

Similar scenarios can be done for Earth-based problem solving. The secret to the success of this program is that it uses an interesting setting to get students into collecting and analyzing data. Plus, it has real world aspects because the

students have to justify what they are doing and have a limited budget to do their investigations.

A Highly Regarded Learning Strategy

Many high schools across North America are requiring teachers to use PBL to teach and test science content.

PBL and related teaching strategies are also recommended in the National Science Teaching Standards developed by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

They carry their recommendations over to college education. Plus, many college accreditation agencies and state higher education agencies are looking for PBL and active learning initiatives to determine the quality of education being delivered in the sciences.

Recommended Readings

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At Times it Matters

Quick Tip

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My syllabus uses the term *review* instead of *test* to allay my students' preconceived negative notions developed with past testing experiences.



I explain that tests are indeed reviews, in that they are an opportunity to demonstrate what students have learned. It's really an official for-the-record review. When students put pen to paper, it allows me to assess their cognitive knowledge.

I use *overview* to describe the final exam or last test of the semester.

Furthermore, I use *preview*, as it is akin to a practice session designed to answer any last-minute questions on material or even concerns as related to the upcoming review.

Thus, judiciously choosing words used in a syllabus or spoken in the classroom carries benefits for those who may not be good test-takers, especially when the mere mention of a test can cause tumultuous anxiety. ✨

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identified are of models. Penny Shrawder graciously allows TFS to use her original oil painting image "Full Expression" to portray the ultimate goal of teaching and learning.