



CREATIVE TEACHING Pocketbook

2nd edition

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Cartoons:
Phil Hailstone

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When and why

If you set up active learning activities in your lessons, you and your class can work as a team. Students will more readily engage with their learning if they can participate in the delivery of their lesson. Encourage this by giving them specific parts of the lesson to deliver. Keep the timing and focus very tight to ensure pace and purpose for the activity. Lesson starters and closers are ideal to give over to students, as they encourage the skills of summary and synthesis.



5 Key Points

- * _____
- * _____
- * _____
- * _____
- * _____



Using TV as a model



Television soap operas are a good planning guide. *Students remember reasonably complicated and multiple plot lines* due to the way these programmes use **reinforcement, recap, and cliffhangers**. Model your lessons along these lines. Reinforcement and recap become 'starters' and cliffhangers are useful 'plenaries' which then work as starters next time.

This approach also allows a sense of drama to be given to more abstract content such as mathematical and scientific equations, ending lessons with unsolved puzzles and formulae that will be resolved the next lesson. Science practicals are particularly good for engendering this approach, the experiments being the reinforcement, and the outcomes the cliffhangers. What is important is how you, as a teacher, set up the delivery – a larger than life, slightly 'hammy' approach rarely fails.



Using script writing and role-play



Make students' leisure interests work for you as a teacher.

- Use film techniques to help you – get students to storyboard the important aspects of the lesson. Reduce key facts to single statements with accompanying pictures. In time ask students to identify key facts and storyboard them
- Ask students to write lesson content up as if pitching for a TV advert. If you teach a practical subject, you can get the students to put together adverts for the equipment they are using, based on their own use of them
- Ask the class how various soap characters would view the work being done. Pick a range of characters to use, but include a couple of very dim ones. This will allow students to hang their own difficulties on the dim soap character, and allow you to help by asking the students how they would make the character understand

Find inspiration in quiz shows



You can use TV quiz shows as lesson templates. Using modern shows will create a sense of familiarity in the students' minds and help the learning, but older programmes can be useful too. You probably have favourite quiz shows of your own – see how you can adapt them for use in the class.

Here are a few ideas:

- The old show *'Runaround'* can be adapted to get students to respond to questions – post different answers in different parts of the room and students choose which one to stand by
- *'The Weakest Link'* – focusing questions on your subject area is an ideal way to motivate smaller or less able classes
- Hot-seating as in *'Mastermind'* is also productive

Encourage the students to invent their own television game show based on your lesson content. The students can then develop this as a quiz game that you can use each year.



Working with character cards



Some students find it difficult when asked to respond to questions as themselves. You can set up character cards to help them engage with this kind of task in role.

- Make the character cards simple for ease of use – they could be emotional character prompts – for example, how would an impatient or angry person react to the lesson content?
- Set up prompt cards to allow students to explore different viewpoints. For example, how would a deaf/blind/different language speaking student be best taught the content of the lesson?

These approaches will also help students develop an understanding of other people's viewpoints.

Angry hats and empathy glasses



Using simple props can encourage students to see ideas from various perspectives. They can also introduce a sense of fun into the learning processes – always a positive thing.

Angry hats. Buy two or three hats from a charity shop. Label them with contrasting emotions or personality types. The simplest are an angry hat and a happy hat. The student wearing the hat has to respond in the manner of the label on the hat.

Empathy glasses. Make a big prop of a pair of glasses. They empower the wearer to see things or examine ideas from another person's point of view.



Whose round is it?



You can encourage students to interact with a range of materials by making the lesson competitive, with some rewards for the winning teams.

- As a one-off, set up a lesson like a pub quiz with the class divided into teams participating in different rounds to get a final score
- Give the students round headings suggesting an activity or approach, (eg one round could be called '*Fill in the Blanks*' another '*Odd One Out*') and run the rounds once a fortnight or so to set up the league approach

If the teams are kept the same, a league system can be set up for the year. You can display the quiz league in your classroom to provide a competitive focus and an interactive display. You could also allocate roles within the teams, eg score recorder or team captain to increase a sense of responsibility within the class.

These approaches will help your students to build a sense of teamwork, as well as sharpening their research and synthesis skills.

Convert the work



You have almost certainly, at some point in your teaching life, used the approach which converts lesson content to newspaper pages. Here are some variations on the theme that you could try out with your students.

- Create cartoons – both strip and single frames of key learning points
- Get students to concentrate knowledge into newsflashes/headlines



About the author



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Has been teaching since 1992 and as an AST since 2001. He oversees initial teacher training, OTT development, and NQT mentoring, and is responsible for implementing accelerated learning ideas. He recently supported a school in special measures, offering in-class strategies across a range of subjects. Roy has also had a number of freelance contributions appear in the TES, and has himself been the subject of an article on Advanced Skills Teachers.

Acknowledgements

This new edition is dedicated to Heather and Rachel W.

I would like to thank all the staff and pupils at Blackfen School for Girls in Sidcup, as well as the teachers at Greenford High School 1976-82. I owe a great deal to colleagues past and present, and would particularly like to thank Gill Barlow, Shelagh Harrison, Peter Bundell and Fred Valletta. I would also like to thank my current headteacher, Louise Sharples, for her support with my AST role. I find inspiration in many quarters and thanks also go to Barbara Stokes, my cats Buster and Mitch, Simon Robinson and all DPAS members everywhere; Paul, Tamsin and Matthew; the late Jon Pertwee and Tom Baker.