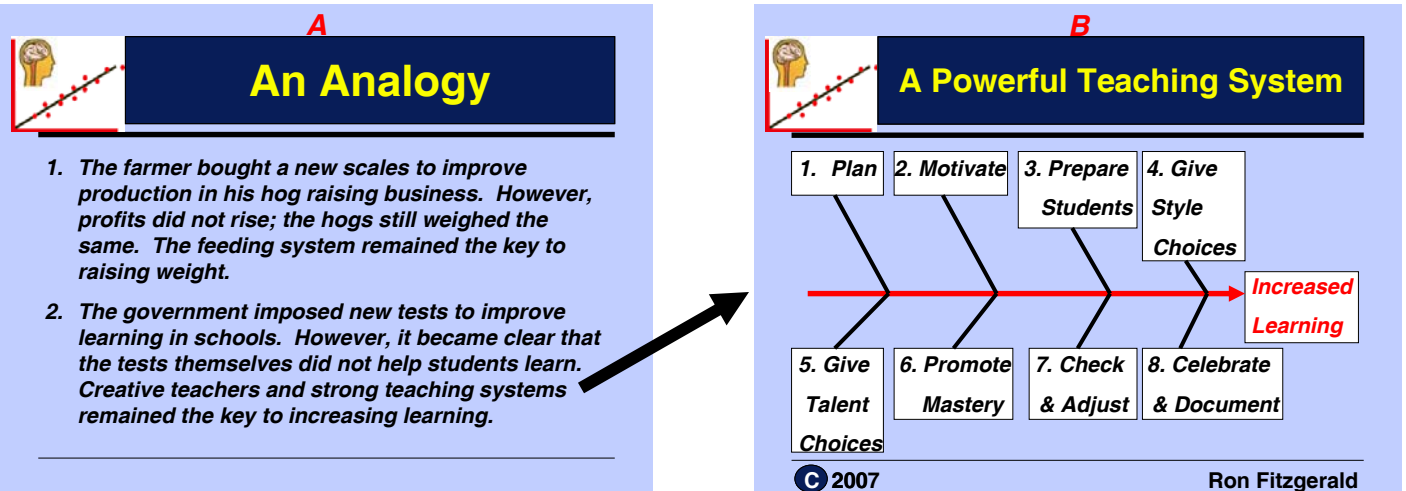


Smart Teaching Tips

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Components of a Successful Teaching System

Consider these graphics:



Graphic A reminds us that teachers and a teaching SYSTEM, not tests, are the factors that lead to increased learning. Graphic B shows components of a tested and successful teaching system. Each of the components is very critical to maximum learning.

The details of this system can be studied by going to Topic #2 and related topics on the web site www.SmartTeaching.org. Topic #3 even leads to an available teachers' handbook that completely explains the system. Here we are simply highlighting the importance of each component:

1. **PLAN** -- Desired performance skills should be defined in advance of teaching or students and the teacher will not know when they have "succeeded." Standards from the state and professional organizations, local mission statements, employers, and even student wishes to some degree are a starting point. The performance goals then lead to planning curriculum units, materials, and learning activities in next components.
2. **MOTIVATE** -- Motivated students learn better. Two main "secrets" to motivation are (a) ANCHORING or showing students that you will give them power and that they are safe in your class and (b) CONNECTING/HOOKING the students to real life usefulness with some unique experience at the start of every unit.
3. **PREPARE STUDENTS** -- Before proceeding with brain-friendly teaching techniques and continuous improvement processes, be sure to teach the basics and reasons for such to the students. This can be done in individual classes and/or as a centralized project for an entire school. Students who learn to learn and are informed partners learn better.

Continued.

4. **GIVE STYLE CHOICES** -- Some students receive information more effectively in different ways than other students. If you give students some learning style choices (visual, auditory, somatic, reflective), you avoid discriminating against any one style. Assuming that everyone learns best in the same way is like assuming that everyone is the same height, sheer nonsense.
5. **GIVE TALENT CHOICES** -- Students have different talents or multiple intelligences to different degrees, again like the height analogy. Be sure to give choices here as you proceed to the important application/solving stage of learning. This is the stage where students try out what they have hopefully learned and “construct meaning” that makes the learning stick. Application moves students from abstraction to demonstrating performance or the need for more learning help. It is intertwined with components 6 and 7 as students write, compute, analyze, construct, debate, provide service, or lead.
6. **PROMOTE MASTERY** -- This is an important philosophy to implement. Never be satisfied with a teach-test-grade sequence. That can often leave too many students with incomplete learning. After teaching, check for mastery via an application exercise or formative assessment (below) without grading. If a student has not mastered one or more skills, give the student an added or alternative learning opportunity before testing for grading. A teacher’s mission is to promote mastery, not grades on a normal curve. More students will then achieve more learning and higher grades as they “smash” the obsolete normal curve of grading.
7. **CHECK & ADJUST** -- Using the above mastery philosophy, the proper sequence in this system is teach-assess or check-adjust-test-grade. This flexible framework should focus both on the individual and on continuous improvement of group performance through adjusted learning.
8. **CELEBRATE & DOCUMENT** -- At the end of a unit of learning, celebrate and document improved learning with portfolios, certificates, reports, praise, etc. Success and improvement encourage more success. Documented results become the starting point for future learning and improvement.

A major role of superintendents and principals here is to understand, encourage, and support powerful system teaching in every possible way.

A future newsletter will describe ways to fulfill this role.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SMART TEACHING TIPS & MANY RELATED RESOURCES are available on the free web site www.SmartTeaching.org. To view the available mini-newsletters, go to the home page and click on the button:

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