FIG-uring It Out: Understanding and Promoting Student Motivation
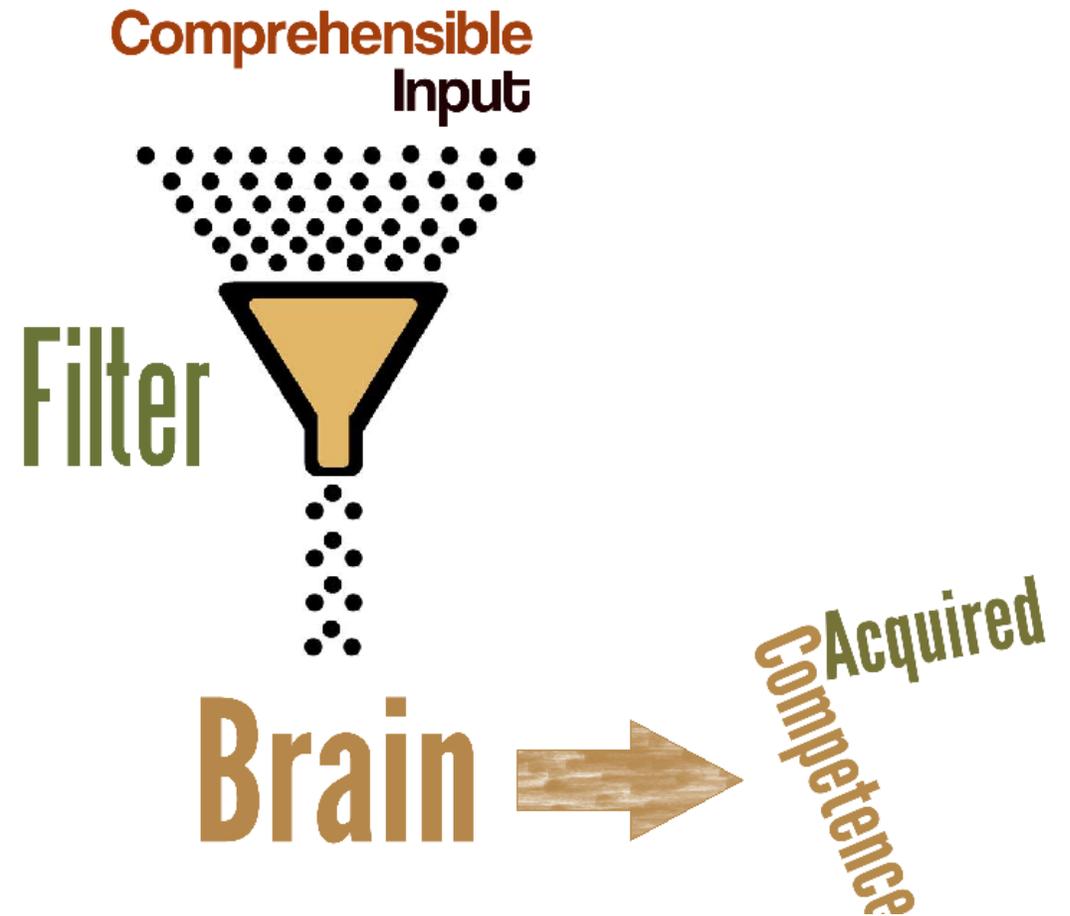
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http://www4.uwm.edu/learningobjects/motivating_students.cfm

Why SPA 111?

- PRESS team focused on SPA 112
- Implementation of Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs) in all foreign language courses
- Introductory course

Two important barriers to learning in FL

- **Affective filters:** emotional and motivational barriers to learning

- **Intrinsic motivation:** finding the connection between individual student and subject matter

Comprehensible Input

Filter

Brain → Acquired Competence

http://www.languagesurfer.com/2013/10/05/part-v-the-affective-filter-hypothesis/

What can we do?

- Promising themes in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) literature:
  - Help students recognize fears (Horwitz; Alrabai)
  - Advice on effective language learning strategies (Horwitz)
  - Journal writing (Horwitz; Young)
  - Increase self-confidence, positive reinforcement (Alrabai; Young)
  - Focus on "euphoric tension" – good stress (Spielmann)
    - "make the message so interesting that students forget that it is in another language" (Krashen; Young)

Our Strategy – Spring 2015

Three types of weekly lessons that would culminate in a final passion project presentation:

- Blog entries
  - These usually consisted of discussion of study tools
  - Language learning skills
- Forum Discussions
  - Cultural content related to course material
  - Students discuss specifics with each other
- Passion Portfolio
  - Part of a 3-week cycle
  - Students add an entry 5 times during the semester
  - Each entry helps student develop the final portfolio

Instructions for the weekly lab assignments

Each week, you should respond to one of the following assignments. You can find your first assignment by clicking Weekly Labs and then the corresponding week. You should type your answers in a Word document and copy and paste them into Sakai, so that if something happens to the browser window you do not lose your work. Each weekly assignment will have its due date posted in the title - assignments are due at midnight on the due date. Don't forget to also complete your homework on iLrn.

Personal blog – This is a space for you to reflect about your study habits, learning styles and performance on class evaluations. To get full credit for this, you should give a thoughtful reply to each question that is posed. When you click on the blog entry, Sakai will open blogs in a new tab. Submit your blog post in the new tab and close that tab to get back to lessons.

Forum – These will be short discussion questions designed to encourage critical thinking and a deeper understanding of language and culture. The most important rule of forum discussion is RESPECT. While being respectful to your classmates, you should give your own thoughts and opinions related to the topic at hand. Show that you can think critically about the topic and have an intelligent discussion with your classmates.

Submit question responses by Monday at midnight, and briefly respond to a classmate's post by Wednesday at midnight. Your response should be about a paragraph. In your response to a classmate's opinion, you should give them some meaningful feedback and/or propose questions/alternatives.

Portfolio – This is a tool you will publish something related to your personal passion topic that will be chosen at the beginning of the semester. With each of these publications you should gain more understanding, knowledge, and perspective about your topic and the Spanish-speaking world. At the end of the course, you will make a presentation about some aspect of your topic in Spanish.

📖 Weekly Labs

📖 Week 1 - Due 1/19

📖 Week 2 - Due 1/26 and 1/28

📖 Week 3 - Due 2/2

📖 Week 4 - Due 2/9

📖 Week 5 - Due 2/16 and 2/18

📖 Week 6 - Due 2/23

📖 Week 7 - Due 3/2

📖 Week 8 - Due 3/16 and 3/18

📖 Week 9 - Due 3/23

📖 Week 10 - Due 3/30

📖 Week 12 - Due 4/13

📖 Week 13 - Due 4/20

📖 Week 15 - Due 5/4

Passion project

- Early cycles bring in vocabulary related to the chosen topic
- Students are asked to brainstorm on what they may already know about their chosen topic as it related to the Spanish speaking cultures
- Students then are asked to dig deeper and do more research related to their chosen topics
- In the end, students end up with a wider view of their topic as it is found in the Spanish-speaking world
- Since topics can be so broad, students are then asked to make a presentation, mostly in Spanish, on a specific part of their research

Spring 2015 – Qualitative Data

- "What I liked best was it may me think. I had to explore myself, to find out what makes me unique. **I was unsure of my passion until I looked into my soul and started to write from my heart.** What I liked least was trying to write my thoughts and words into Spanish. It was not easy trying to find words you know for things you wanted to say."

- "The weekly assignments in Sakai **helped to explore the language on my own** and helped me prepare for my presentation. I liked that they were practical, yet challenging. I also liked that I was given feedback from the instructor and my classmates.

- "I really liked the assignments because it **allowed me to connect Spanish with something I already enjoy outside of class… The final presentation was a breeze after doing the labs.**"

Spring 2015 – Quantitative Data

Student Motivation and Anxiety Scores – Spring 2015	Pre-Semester Survey	Post-Semester Survey	Impact
I enjoy working with others	5.3	5.4	+0.1
I am excited to learn about other places and cultures	5.9	6	+0.1
I am excited to be able to communicate in Spanish	6.2	6.2	
I am good at learning languages	3.7	4.4	+0.7
I am nervous about my ability to communicate in Spanish	3.3	3.3	
I worry I will fail the course	4.8	5	+0.2
I am afraid I will freeze up if my instructor calls on me at random	3.9	4.2	+0.3
I hope to use my knowledge of Spanish language and culture beyond this course	6.5	6.4	-0.1

Strategy Revisions and Lessons Learned

After the spring semester, we met to discuss our initial results and make a few changes for the Fall 2015 semester.

Strategy Revisions and Lessons Learned

- The forums, blogs and portfolio entries were all initially organized on Sakai under "Lessons." There proved to be a number of bugs and user deficiencies (mine and students'), so we simplified and moved everything into "Forums."
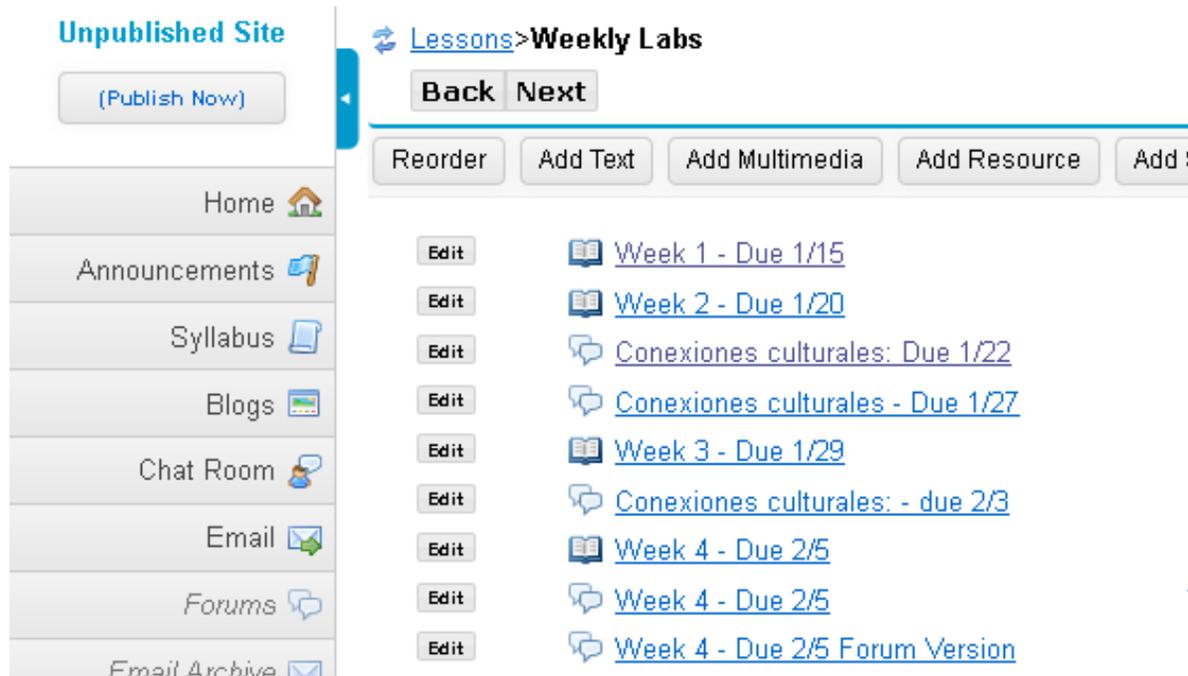
Unpublished Site

(Publish Now)

Home
Announcements
Syllabus
Blogs
Chat Room
Email
Forums
Email Archive

Lessons>**Weekly Labs**

Back **Next**

Reorder | Add Text | Add Multimedia | Add Resource | Add

Edit — Week 1 - Due 1/15
Edit — Week 2 - Due 1/20
Edit — Conexiones culturales: Due 1/22
Edit — Conexiones culturales - Due 1/27
Edit — Week 3 - Due 1/29
Edit — Conexiones culturales: - due 2/3
Edit — Week 4 - Due 2/5
Edit — Week 4 - Due 2/5
Edit — Week 4 - Due 2/5 Forum Version

This assignment was initially posted as a Blog, reposted as a Forum, and finally worked on the third try!
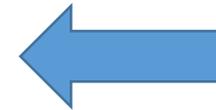
Strategy Revisions and Lessons Learned

Simplified! All assignments were posted as Forums.

Strategy Revisions and Lessons Learned

- Instructors chose which forums and blogs they would use again and made edits as desired.

Strategy Revisions and Lessons Learned

- The Passion Portfolio project was given enthusiastic reviews. We continued to include this project in our courses and created a rubric for the final presentation with requirements related to format, length and content.

Strategy Revisions and Lessons Learned

- **Passion Portfolio PowerPoint Outline**
- Slide 1: Title (in Spanish and English)
- Slide 2: One paragraph about what you knew about your topic prior to researching.
- Slide 3: Ten basic vocabulary words related to your topic (in Spanish and in English)
- Slide 4: Subtopic One (3-4 sentences in Spanish & picture or video)
- Slide 5: Subtopic Two (3-4 sentences in Spanish & picture or video)
- Slide 6: Subtopic Three (3-4 sentences in Spanish & picture or video)
- Slide 7: Two things you now "saber" about your topic and two things you now "conocer."
- Slide 8: Conclusion
- Slide 9: One paragraph about what surprised you, questions for further research…
- Slide 10: Sources

Strategy Revisions and Lessons Learned

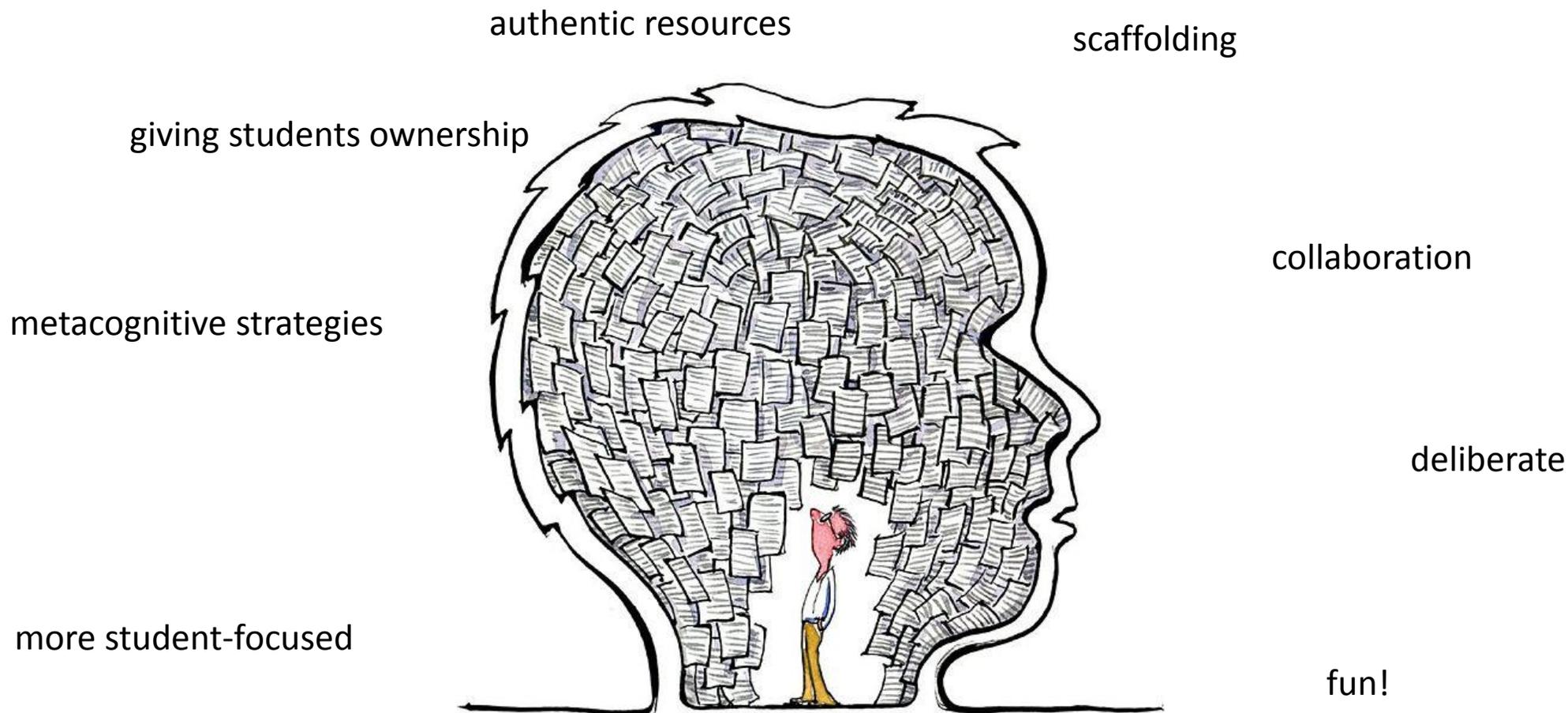| PRESENTATIONAL MODE: PRESENTATION				
Content	Presentation includes all required elements. Information is presented with accuracy and rich details.	Presentation includes all required elements. Information is presented with accuracy and some details.	Presentation includes all required elements. Information is presented with accuracy and a few extra details.	Presentation does not include all required elements and/or includes inaccurate information.
Impact	Presentation is appealing, creative and engaging to the audience. Presenter makes consistent eye contact. Notes are rarely used, if at all.	Presentation is appealing and engages audience. Presenter makes consistent eye contact. May use notes, but only as a quick reference.	Presentation makes attempts to engage and appeal to audience. Presenter makes intermittent eye contact. Uses notes, but does not simply read from them.	Little engagement of audience. Minimal eye contact. Relies heavily on notes.
Comprehensibility	Presentation is understood without difficulty by those accustomed to the speech of early language learners. Unfamiliar words are explained, in Spanish or acted out, to spectators.	Presentation is understood with only occasional difficulty by those accustomed to the speech of early language learners. Unfamiliar words are explained, in Spanish or acted out, to spectators.	Presentation is understood, although often with difficulty by those accustomed to the speech of early language learners. Unfamiliar words are explained, in Spanish or acted out, to spectators.	Presentation is difficult to understand and/or many unfamiliar words used that are not explained to spectators.
Grammar control	Presentation uses accurate structures. Some errors occur with more complex structures, but show no patterns of error. Errors do not impede understanding.	Presentation uses mostly accurate structures, with more errors occurring with more complex structures. Errors show no more than one pattern of error. Errors do not impede understanding.	Presentation uses mostly accurate structures, with more errors occurring with more complex structures. Errors show few patterns of error. Errors only slightly impede understanding.	Presentation uses many inaccurate structures, even on a basic level, showing multiple patterns of error. Errors do impede understanding.
Vocabulary	Presentation uses a rich variety of vocabulary appropriate to SPA 111.	Presentation uses a rich variety of vocabulary appropriate for SPA 111, for the most part. Vocabulary errors do not impede communication.	Presentation uses mostly appropriate vocabulary but lacks variety. Vocabulary errors may impede communication some.	Presentation uses inappropriate vocabulary and lacks variety. Vocabulary errors impede communication.

Fall 2015 – Qualitative Data

- "The weekly forums pushed me to think more about the process of learning a language and what it means to [learn a language]. By thinking about these things every week it helped me to connect to the language and what I was learning with less difficulty."

- "The weekly lab assignments helped me to understand more about the culture of Spanish speaking countries. I liked how they prepared me to understand how my passion was viewed in the different countries. I one thing that i did not like about them was not being able to focus more on the passion portfolios."

Fall 2015 – Quantitative Data

Student Motivation and Anxiety Scores – Fall 2015	Pre-semester survey	Post-semester survey	Impact
I enjoy working with others	6	5.4	-0.6
I am excited to learn about other places and cultures	5.8	5.1	-0.7
I am excited to be able to communicate in Spanish	5	4.8	-0.2
I am good at learning languages	4.4	3.8	-0.6
I am nervous about my ability to communicate in Spanish	2.8	3.3	+0.5
I worry I will fail the course	4.6	5.2	+0.6
I am afraid I will freeze up if my instructor calls on me at random	4.1	4	-0.1
I hope to use my knowledge of Spanish language and culture beyond this course	6.3	4.9	-1.4

Reflections

authentic resources

scaffolding

giving students ownership

collaboration

metacognitive strategies

deliberate

more student-focused

fun!

http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/media/upload/blog/data-image.jpeg

Lighting the Fire

- Intrinsic motivation = the best motivation

- Learning goals > grade goals

- Course content from students = meaningful for all parties

- Incorporating personal interests = "real world" applications
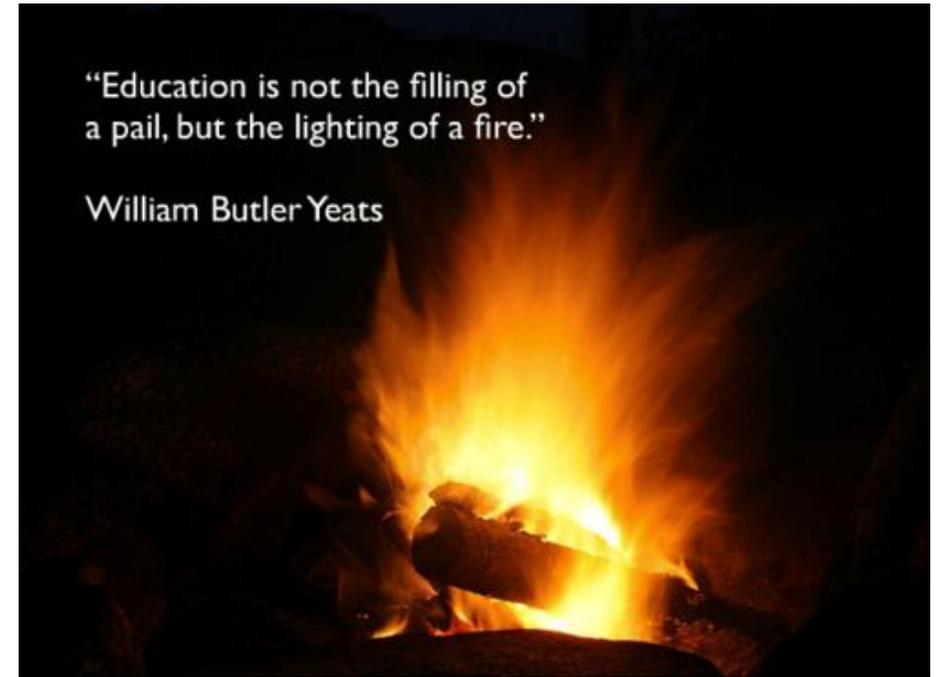
"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

William Butler Yeats

http://mathcurmudgeon.blogspot.com/2012/07/fill-pail-then-light-fire.html

Course Applications Across Disciplines

- Write down one of your favorite pastimes or a personal passion of particular interest to you.

- Now, think about how this interest could relate to the discipline you teach. If you don't teach, pick a favorite class subject and think of how it would connect. Jot down the connections.

- Share with your tablemates how you might implement this passion in your chosen discipline.

Other Ways to Use Student Interests in Class

- Encourage sharing of hobbies and interests

- Student-created curriculum

- Student-inspired themes and content

References

- Alrabai, Fakieh. "The Influence of Teachers' Anxiety-reducing Strategies on Learners' Foreign Language Anxiety." *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 9.2 (2014): 163-90. Web.

- Horwitz, Elaine K. "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety." *The Modern Language Journal* 70.2 (1986): 125-32. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Jan. 2016.

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- Young, Dolly Jesusita. "Creating a Low-Anxiety Classroom Environment: What Does Language Anxiety Research Suggest?" *The Modern Language Journal* 75.4 (1991): 426-37. Web.