

Preventing Burn Out or Demoralization

The trick is to gather knowledge, abilities, experience, and expertise along the way without having every lesson fossilize into the stained, yellowed notes of material and approaches that have been done in the same way year upon year. Become an expert, but never lose the drive to be better.

Book Demoralized: Why Teachers Leave the Profession They Love and How They Can Stay.

“I can’t teach the way I know I’m supposed to be teaching.” “The profession has changed.”

This isn’t burn-out. This is demoralization. How teachers “re-moralize” Moral rewards are the renewable resources that teachers can access when doing good work. Individuals engage in good work when they believe the work serves a social purpose that contributes to the well-being of others, and the way the work is conducted is aligned with that social purpose. Morally motivated teachers engaged in good work can “fill their tanks” at any point of their career.

Powerful Engagement Activity and Closure Activities for Theatre Classes and Rehearsals

“Tell Me Something Good.” A warm up prompt which I learned from attending a conference was to engage the students immediately with the question, “What’s good?” Students share, listen, and are engaged. What a way to start a class. This habit becomes a welcome routine in my classroom engagement and the students’ willingness to share. On days when I might feel a need to dive in with the lesson, the question arose, “But you didn’t ask us what’s good?”

Of course, you can put time limits on this experience or employ it on certain days only; I began to realize how much I needed the kick off when a fellow faculty member passed away. I answered the prompt by remembering some of the good things that she taught me about teaching and shared the valuable tips with my students. They need to know that we value what is good, including our fellow teachers and them, the students.

Powerful Closure Activities

Part of Madeline Hunter’s Lesson plan model includes a checklist of eight mandatory teaching practices: anticipatory set, objective, and purpose, input, modeling, checking for understanding, guided practice, independent practice, and closure. I find that we often do not plan time for closure; that we are in a hurry to get to the bell or the end of rehearsal.

So I continue to find ways to include meaningful closures, which end the lesson and create lasting impressions. According to and Edutopia Blog on Closures, teachers use closure to: check for understanding and inform subsequent instruction; emphasize key information; tie up loose ends; correct misunderstandings. Students find closure helpful for: summarizing, reviewing, and demonstrating their understanding of major points; consolidating and internalizing key information; linking lesson ideas to conceptual framework and/or previously-learned knowledge; transferring ideas to new situations.

Snowstorm: Students write down what they learned or a question they have about the lesson on a small piece of paper and wad it up. On a signal, all throw the paper snowballs in the air; each learner picks up a nearby snowball and reads it aloud. Students answer any questions or add one idea to the one given on the paper.

Two-Dollar Summary: Students write a two-dollar (or more) summary of the lesson. Each word is worth ten cents. For extra scaffolding, ask students to include specific words in their statements.

DJ Summary: learners write one concept they learned in the form of a favorite song. And sing it.

Gallery Walk (a familiar practice): On paper groups of students write and draw what they learned. After the completed works are attached to the classroom walls, other students affix Stickies to the posters to extend on the ideas, add questions, or offer praise.

Question Stems: Use question stems framed around Bloom's Taxonomy

(<http://www.teachthought.com/critical-thing/blooms-taxonomy/25-question-stems-framed-around-blooms-taxonomy/>)

Have students exchange cards and answer the question they have acquired.

So What?: Students answer the following prompt: What takeaways from the lesson will be important to know three years from now? Gai Jones' tip ask middle and high school students to answer with what life lessons will they remember three years from now.

Find a First-Grade Student: Have students describe a concept, procedure, or skill in terms so simple that a child in first grade would get it.

Elevator Pitch: Ask student to summarize the main idea in under 60 seconds to another students acting as a well-known personality who works in your discipline. After summarizing, students should identify why the famous person might find the idea significant.

Exit Ticket Folder: Ask students to write their name, what they learned, and any lingering questions on a blank card or "ticket." Before they leave class, direct them to deposit their exit tickets in a folder or bin labeled either "Got it," "more Practice, Please," or "I Need Some Help!"—whichever label best represents their relationship to the day's content.

Gai Jones' Tip

End of Rehearsal Action Item-Before anyone leaves have each actor/technical designer/staff member write any action item they need to accomplish before the next rehearsal or by a specific date. Take time to hear each read aloud.

Feel free to alter or blend any opportunity listed above.