

CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL THEORIES

Editor's Note: These examples came from Jeff Hamblin, Rhonda Seamons, Jeff Anderson, and the Assessment Handbook of the College of Language and Letters. They illustrate the six educational theories outlined in Rhonda's "Teaching and Learning: Educational Theories." For additional suggestions, see McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers 11th Edition. If you have not already received a copy, you may contact Wylene Jensen in 290 Kimball Building.

SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTIONISM

Through actual experience or a simulation, teachers who use Social Reconstructionism challenge their students to think and feel—and to acquire strong moral values.

Academic Travel Programs

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Academic travel enhances the classroom experience. Travel must be connected with academic courses or significant service projects. It should broaden students' cultural and personal horizons. Through travel, students can "walk" the pages of the textbook rather than simply read them. They can experience at firsthand the architecture, artwork, monuments, foods, and climate of another time and place.

BYU-Idaho offers a limited number of academic travel programs. Students choose from among about a half-dozen courses. Domestic programs give students the opportunity to reflect on life in the United States and what this country represents. International programs include immersion in other cultures, which helps students discover the differences and, more importantly, the similarities between two worlds. Interaction with people from other cultures also teaches students a great deal about verbal and nonverbal communication—especially when students are learning a foreign language.

Academic Travel Programs Offered in 2002

Religious History Tour:	Italy, Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Switzerland, and France
Explore China:	Hong Kong, Beijing, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, and Xi'an
On the Pacific-Discovery:	Oregon Coast, Salmon River, and Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks
Horseback Discovery:	Eastern Idaho
British Literary Tour:	England, Wales, Scotland, Belgium, Ireland, and France
Mesoamerica:	Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize

Travel Europe–Humanities Tour:	London, Paris, Rothenburg, Salzburg, Prague, Venice, Vienna, Florence, Rome, and Athens
Mormon–American Travel Studies:	Jamestown, Williamsburg, Washington DC, Concord, Palmyra, Kirtland, and Nauvoo
Urban Studies:	Chicago
Natural Science Field Expedition:	Yellowstone, the Tetons, Salmon River Country, National Parks in Utah, and the Grand Canyon

Café Déjeuner—Integrated Curriculum in Culinary Arts

Culinary Arts at BYU-Idaho has recently implemented a student-operated café and bakery modeling Social Reconstructionism. About 50 Culinary Arts majors are involved. The students participate in menu planning, recipe testing, and complete set-up of the restaurant and perform its daily operations.

Five 3-week rotations take place each semester, allowing students to experience all aspects of Café Déjeuner. This experience corresponds to the students’ coursework. Students are randomly assigned their rotations based upon the schedule of required Culinary Arts classes and must take appropriate courses to match their rotations.

Some days you wonder if the students are learning anything. Other days you feel like this is the best thing in the world. For example, today a student casually remarked, “Since doing this, the things I am learning about in accounting make so much more sense.” This is what Social Reconstructionism and curricular integration are all about.

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EXISTENTIALISM

Through questioning and independent research, teachers use the Existentialist approach to encourage their students to exercise agency and make personal meaning.

Journals

Journals promote active learning by asking students to observe, summarize, question, speculate, connect, take a stand, and revise. They also help students gain fluency and confidence in writing. Journals become a resource through which students continue and expand their understanding. When students write knowing that the teacher or a classmate will read their work, they establish closer relationships with others.

Journal entries may result from prompts or from random thoughts. They may be completed out of class or as part of a ten-minute “opening exercise.” Not all journal entries need to be graded by the instructor. Students may date or number their journal entries and integrate them into the day’s instruction from time to time. Faculty can ask students to

share journal entries in small groups or for prompts to the day's discussion. It is also a wise practice to have students re-read their journal two or three times during the semester and write an entry about the growth and understanding they observe in themselves.

Reading Assignment Journal

The purpose of this type of journal is to acquaint the student with new information that lays the foundation for further class discussion. Students submit a typed journal entry (of about 500 words) for each of the readings assigned in the course. These are due *at the beginning of the class period*. The content of the entry is up to the student. The student may include key events, ideas, innovations, and personalities; interpretations or feelings in response to the readings; or opinions about the authors' assessments and interpretations. At the end of each entry is at least one question to which the student wishes the teacher's response.

This assignment can be easily tailored to any subject. Religion courses may ask students to outline significant scriptural passages, identifying and interpreting doctrines as well as indicating insight gained from the reading. Faculty in the Department of Foreign Language might require students to write their journals in the language studied.

PERENNIALISM

Through readings and discussion, teachers who use the Perennialist approach confront timeless problems through readings and case studies.

Case Studies

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Case studies, once used primarily in business and law courses, are now widely used in a variety of disciplines. These studies emphasize problem solving based on applicable course content. The benefit of case studies is that cases provide a context for learning in contrast to just memorizing disassociated facts, helping students comprehend and retain information.

Some case studies are simply an analysis of real problems in a particular field. For example, a technical writing course may evaluate considerations of audience, style, and tone in a case study of the *Challenger* space shuttle disaster, which occurred in part because of documentation that allowed for misunderstanding of pertinent information.

Other case studies present a problem and then ask the students, usually working in groups, to solve this problem. The solution can be presented in various ways. A psychology course may ask students to role-play a situation, illustrating correct principles of stress management. In a business class students may present their solution in an oral report. If the case is based on an actual problem, the instructor can have the class

consider how the actual situation and actual solutions implemented differ from those presented by the class.

Break Questions

A teacher can halt the discussion and ask students to respond in writing to a question. Volunteers may read their responses to the class, or students may share with a partner.

Concept Paraphrasing

After a difficult concept has been presented, the instructor may reinforce the learning by pairing students to teach it to each other: “Your partner didn’t understand concept X. Explain it to him or her.”

ESSENTIALISM

Through a lecture and demonstration, teachers who use the Essentialist approach focus on giving their students a sound understanding of fundamentals.

Lecture & Lab

Many science courses underscore content presented in classroom lecture with a laboratory course, for example Biology 100 and 102, Principles of Biology and its accompanying lab. The goal of these courses is to “provide students with a positive and memorable exposure to biology and enhance lifelong learning by training them in the scientific method and critical thinking skills.” In the lab, selected experiments reinforce concepts introduced in lecture.

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Multi-media Presentations

Since the University has installed numerous multimedia classrooms, teachers can make use of film clips, PowerPoint, and HTML presentations. For example, a homepage or Blackboard site can contain information about a particular concept, significant person in that area of study, or significant event in the field. Using hypertext, the teacher can illustrate the process of problem solving. Clips of commercials can be used to illustrate significant principles in sociology.

Marginal Notations

The teacher encourages the students to sparingly underline key points in their reading and requires that they write in their own words the gist of the ideas they have underlined. Few readers do this, yet paraphrase is essential to comprehension and application. Reviewing marginal notations a few times over several-day period transfers paraphrased ideas from short-term to long-term memory. As an extra step, teachers may ask students to use marginal notes to compose a short summary.

PROGRESSIVISM

Through cooperative learning and integrated activities, teachers who use the Progressivist approach try to center their lessons around student needs—often making learning fun.

Dialogue Starters—Practicing a Foreign Language

The teacher poses interesting or thought-provoking questions for the students to answer in the target language. Sample topics include:

- Believe It or Not: In groups, have the students discuss things they may or may not believe.
- Dating: What are appropriate and inappropriate things to do on a date? Is kissing appropriate on the first date? If not then, when? How do you know when you have found the right one to marry?
- My Life: Talk about what you do on a normal day (or your friends, roommates, family, etc.).
- Goals: Talk about your future plans. What would you do if you had only one more week (year, day, etc.) to live?

Small Group Discussions

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Having students discuss concepts or issues in small groups can be an effective method for engaging students who do not normally participate in class discussion. Studies also show that students who participate in student-led discussions may have greater curiosity, asking more questions and expressing their opinions. Effective student-led discussions require instructor preparation. Provide students with discussion-eliciting questions and give the group measurable goals to accomplish in the discussion. Assign group members a specific role to engage them in the activity. If you use group discussions frequently, have students switch roles so that every group member has the opportunity to fill each role. Roles might include

- Leader—Responsible for getting the discussion going, moving the group through the various parts of the assignments, and keeping the discussion focused on the assignment.
- Cheerleader—Manages group dynamics and encourages every member to participate. If one group member is speaking too much or too little, the cheerleader can address a specific person by name so that every person participates.
- Timekeeper—Ensures that the group completes the full assignment rather than spending the entire time on one small aspect. The timekeeper should know how much time the group has been given to accomplish the task.
- Recorder/Reporter—Takes notes on the group's discussion and is responsible for reporting to the entire class the group's ideas, findings, and suggestions.

BEHAVIORISM

Through skill drills and competition, teachers who use the Behaviorist approach coach their students to the performance of a desired behavior.

Performance Skills

Many departments on campus provide opportunities for students to learn through performance and evaluation. Students from the Department of Music perform before juries, who evaluate them on an established rating scale (breath control, quality of sound, etc.) Students learning a foreign language will have an oral exam evaluating fluency and pronunciation. Many departments have competitions that evaluate the students' skill performance. For example, the English Department sponsors *Outlet*, a publication of student fiction, poetry, essays, artwork, and music. Material is selected on criteria established by the student-run editorial board.

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Competitive Games—Practicing Language Skills

A number of games, complete with points, winners, and even prizes, can be used to teach vocabulary and other language skills:

- **College Bowl:** The teacher organizes two small teams (5-6 players). In the target language, the teacher describes a word, and the students try to guess it.
- **The Duel:** Two students stand back to back. They are given a card to hold in their hands. They then take five paces and turn around. The first one to name what is on the other's card wins.
- **Jail Game:** A jail cell without bars is drawn on the board. The teacher is drawn inside it. Every time a student answers a question correctly, a bar is added. There may be about five bars and ten questions. If in the ten questions all five bars are not drawn, then the teacher escapes. Students get a kick out of winning and locking the teacher in jail.
- **Mental Math:** Using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, the teacher gives a series of instructions to see which student can solve the problem first in his or her head.
- **Treasure Hunt:** After teaching them how to give directions, the teacher forms two teams of two students each. On each team, one student will give directions in the target language, and the other will follow. Send the "direction followers" outside and hide an object in the room. The "direction givers" use the target language to lead their teammate to the object. Whoever retrieves the object first wins.