

**NADE 2005 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
**March 9 – 11, 2005**  
**Albuquerque, NM**

The following are summaries of the workshops I attended at the NADE Conference.

**“Brain Compatible Teaching Strategies”** presented by Dr. Susan M. Perlis, Marywood University was the most useful of all the sessions I attended.

This highly interactive session focused on the application of brain-compatible or brain-based teaching pedagogy for the developmental classroom. We had the opportunity to model the suggested strategies and were taught how to adapt them to meet our course needs. She covered the following topics: Environmental concerns – external, Classroom Environment, Information Processing Model, Mindmaps, Note cards, Memory, Classroom strategies, and Helping Students Take Responsibility.

Our external environment plays a very important role in learning. The more stressed we are the more our brain chemicals are imbalanced. The synaptic gap passes messages from one neuron to another – chemically. This imbalance prevents this transmission of messages. Acetylcholine is involved in long-term memory formation. This chemical is present in higher levels when we sleep. Serotonin is responsible for inducing relaxation, regulating mood and sleep. Too much serotonin causes one to be fearful, lack self-confidence, and obsessive compulsive. Too little serotonin will cause one to be aggressive, violent and sometimes deviant. When the serotonin is just right, one is confident, calm, and ready to learn. The students who come to Somerset Community College under a lot of stress – home, job, finances, and relationships – are more likely to have difficult time learning.

The second environment is the classroom. Faculty can influence learning by establishing a safe atmosphere. Aromas help but ask about perfume sensitivity before bringing candles or fresh flowers. Encourage students to drink plenty of water because

hydration is essential to learning. When having a long class – two and half hours-, think about allowing snacks. Other factors include the lighting, room arrangement, room temperature, and fresh air. Keep the class fun and lively

The Information Processing Model illustrates the way information goes from input through short-term memory and finally into long-term memory. Some learners are right brained and do better with outlines and logical order while the left-brain learners do better with cognitive maps or mindscaping. We then participated in a group activity using mindmaps. She then shared her method of using note cards. She uses them vertically rather than horizontally. On the front you list the term or concept you are studying. On the back you use the top half for the book definition and the lower half for class notes. This is a useful tool to move items from the short-term memory into the long-term memory.

Dr. Perlis then went through Classroom strategies. They are as follows:

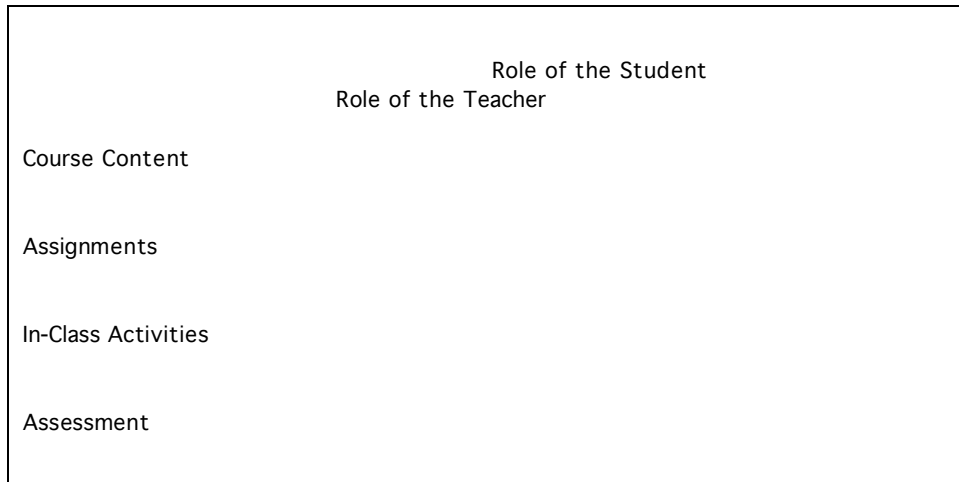
- o Shorten required attention span (20 min. max.)
- o Increase choice in learning
- o Boost relevance and engagement
- o Utilize more unconscious learning – poster, music, projects
- o Provide a variety of learning experiences that engage more senses
- o Use videos to provide overviews or review.
- o Cooperative learning groups – the brain is a social brain
- o Pre- Post- testing for effective assessment
- o Use stories and metaphors to increase meaning making
- o Differentiate instruction – set goals for each student yet maintain the standards for all
- o Music in the classroom – classical/new age
- o Provide opportunities for learners to share their successes
- o Hold students accountable
- o Access to resources
- o Address fears and barriers
- o Don't expect to make changes all at once- opt for class or unit by unit change

- o Know that you will make a difference!!

Last we did a Puzzle Activity to experience different ways to learn giving different information. We first worked the puzzle (25 pieces for ages 3 – 7 year of age) upside down with only the gray showing and without the frame. As a group we first looked for corner pieces – reflecting on our past experience with puzzles. Next we changed puzzles and worked with the right side up and outside the frame. This one was easier because we had the colors and could connect the pieces faster. The last time we worked another puzzle the normal way – right side up and in the frame. Each time we got faster and faster because we had a frame of reference. Some students can function in the gray with little information to where they are going in the course. Other students need the puzzle right side up and in the frame – as much information as you can give them. Dr. Perlis and I agree when beginning a new class, we should start with the puzzle upright and in the frame so students can get connected, gain more confidence and move toward the gray as they are motivated toward self directed learning.

The last thing she gave us was a tool to give to students the first or second day of class. The activity is “Taking Responsibility for Learning. This is a group activity where the RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING worksheet is completed by the group and shared with the class.

Responsibility for Learning



This is a very useful tool to help students and faculty see the importance of working together to accomplish goals of learning.

The next two workshops were in the area of academic support.

The first was **“Finally Getting It All Together: Fully Integrated Academic Support”** delivered by Gwen Braun, Director, and Kathy Mosdal O’Brien, Assistant Director. Their center is located on the Montana State University – Billings. The speakers demonstrated the effectiveness of a fully integrated academic support system and encouraged diagnostic assessment to improve placement and retention. Retention can be enhanced when students experience success with the support of developmental coursework, assessment, and tutoring. Student-centered programs will more successfully produce independent, lifelong learners. The major difference between their center and the STAR Center is they are responsible for testing and all developmental education courses. They schedule the courses and hire the faculty to teach them. Their student population is 4000 on the university campus and 700 on the technical campus. All of their tutors are paid even the teaching faculty in addition to their salaries.

The second workshop was **“Lifting Minds: Assessing Freshman Preparedness for Academic Success”** presented by Gillian Boyce from the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. Ms. Boyce presented a paper exploring how preparing more

confident, successful under prepared freshmen through assessment workshops focusing on self-accountability and managing transitions in order to help students succeed. In the process, a mutually rewarding teaching/learning relationship is built between staff and students. The outcome allows both parties to surpass their original expectations for change management and success. Their center also administers the placement test. Most of her presentation was based on research data used on overheads. That is the major difference between their center and the STAR Center. All of their tutors are volunteer faculty.

**“Stone Age or Technology? Why Just One Way?”** presented by Daryly Stephens, Missouri Southern State University and Diane Martling, William Rainey Harper College. This session provided an opportunity to exchange ideas related to using various technologies in the classroom, technology-inclusive curriculum, and the pros and cons of such usage. The focus was the use of computer classrooms for teaching developmental math. The Missouri Southern State University faculty uses the math **Alex Program** for all of their prep college math (developmental math) courses. The faculty is facilitator who works one on one with the developmental math students. There are no classroom lectures, but scheduled time in a computer lab where the students work toward the goal of completing their math courses. The faculty has a schedule of completion dates to keep the student focused on the deadline goal. The advantage of this method is the student can complete a course early and start the next level course; therefore, progressing through the developmental math courses early. With the regulations for some of the student grant monies, completing the developmental courses early can help the student complete the two year degrees within the time frame stipulated by the grant.

**“Developing Online Courses for Faculty Using SCENARIOS”** was presented by a team of faculty from Valencia Community College. Three on-line SCENARIOS faculty development courses are now being utilized at Valencia for adjunct, full-time tenure track, and developmental education faculty. The presenters

used SCENARIOS Studio software to guide participant teams through the process of defining, designing, developing, and deploying a mini-course as a model for use of full-blown faculty development courses at their institutions. The team used a role play to act out a scene that could be used in the SCENARIOS dialogue. Since they didn't have access to the internet, they had to do their presentation from a power point and a role play. They gave us a packet with more information about their program. Please see me if you are interested in learning more about this method of teaching and learning.

Respectively submitted:

Brenda M. Saunders