



HyperQuests

Multimedia Explorations

**Interactive
Student-Centered
Multimedia/Internet
Investigations and Activities**



*This idea looks
good enough to
investigate!*

HyperQuests: Interactive, Student-Centered Activities



The phrase “HyperQuest” is meant to have you imagine a process where students are engaged in multimedia-based learning and presentations as part of classroom-based explorations with multiple information sources from multiple media types. The process of a HyperQuest is most closely associated with student activities that center around four “I” concepts: inquiry,

investigation, integration and interaction. The design of HyperQuests also includes the “I” resource that is becoming the focus of many classrooms; the Internet. A HyperQuest provides a framework within which a student operates in an independent learning mode, yet is guided by teacher or student templates to use resources that provide appropriate content to the unit of study. These resources will include diverse options such as the Internet, CD-ROMs, laserdiscs, audio, motion video, animation, text, and digital cameras. The process of synthesizing, evaluating and presenting the individual findings, based upon those resources, is left to the student.

The creation of a HyperQuest centers around the use of HyperStudio as an authoring tool. The teacher (or student) creating the HyperQuest should have a comfortable understanding of how HyperStudio handles multiple forms of media and peripherals. The purpose of a HyperQuest can be multi-faceted. Primarily it serves as a means to conserve student time by focusing their effort to resources that have proven content to support the unit of study. This is not to say that the purpose is to restrict the student’s inquiry to a limited number of resources, but rather to give guided practice in using multiple types of resources and perhaps allow any time saved to be used in free-form research areas. HyperQuests can be designed to have students work with particular types of resources to demonstrate their value or practice their use. They can focus on a single content area or be designed around integrated concepts. In addition, an effective but simple HyperQuest could revolve around the student use of only guided Internet resources using the techniques discussed in this session. Visit (k-12.pisd.edu/HyperStudio/HyperQuest.html) for more information on the concepts of HyperQuests. *Please see page 16 for a discussion on the necessary elements and techniques in a classroom environment where the concepts of HyperQuests will flourish best.*



A HyperQuest should contain these elements at a minimum:

1. Introductory material to set the stage for the concept and environments that the student will be experiencing.
2. Well defined task(s) that the student is expected to complete.
3. Help screen(s) that describe what navigation buttons and tools are available to use throughout the HyperQuest.
4. Resources that the student can use to accomplish the stated task. These might include text to be read as part of the HyperStudio stack itself, references to print material that the student is encouraged to read, buttons that connect to laserdisc sequences for the student to view, buttons that connect to CD-ROM resources, animations, motion video, buttons that send email to identified experts or project mentors and links to Internet resources that support the unit of study.
5. Template cards that the student will use to complete a portion of their task. The activities requested of the student to complete might include researching multiple Internet sites and creating links in HyperStudio to those sites which best support the student's presentation, adding images taken with a digital camera or video camera, creating animations to visualize processes, audio recordings to further explain particular thoughts, text as necessary to finalize the communication of ideas and graphic images to accurately depict the findings. These template cards give a structure to the result of the HyperQuest.
6. HyperQuests lend themselves to collaborative work. This could be groups of students within a single classroom or students in remote locations using the Internet to make connections with each other.
7. Self evaluation opportunities throughout the course of the HyperQuest to enable students to produce a high quality product.
8. The completed project given as a presentation for the class or other interested groups. This communication of the findings is an important concept that should be central to the successful completion of a HyperQuest.
9. Open ended topics that lend themselves to further exploration. A first completion of a HyperQuest may lead to further investigation by other students building off of the earlier result.

As you begin the process of designing your own HyperQuests, keep these thoughts in mind:

- Identify those areas of your curriculum that seem to be the most likely to be supported by freely available Internet resources and other electronic-based information.
- Keep bookmark lists or create HyperStudio stacks with sections devoted to topics in the areas you're most interested in designing a HyperQuest for students.



- ☑ Involve other colleagues in the collection and evaluation of HyperQuests that have already been produced.
- ☑ Research the topics yourself before assigning HyperQuests to students to make certain that an appropriate number of resources exist. Of course, expect the students to find resources that you didn't since that is the nature and size of the Internet!
- ☑ Much as you expect of students, work collaboratively with colleagues as you develop your original HyperQuests that integrate Internet resources. This can be done locally or remotely via email.
- ☑ Give back to the Internet what you've had the opportunity to experience and use - in other words, share your HyperQuests so that others can benefit from your work.

Classrooms have undergone many changes over the past few years. Based on research, many schools are learning the importance of creating a brain-compatible environment. There have been various attempts to accomplish this task by the integration of disciplines in the curriculum. Key elements of a brain-compatible classroom should include:

- ◆ student choices
- ◆ multiple activities
- ◆ an enriched environment
- ◆ meaningful content that integrates various technologies

In this unique classroom the teacher becomes a facilitator and the students become self-directed learners. In support of the brain-compatible classroom, the federal government's SCANS report stated: (www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/methods/assment/as7scans.htm)

"The old ways of lecturing and memorization must give way to the method of learning by doing. We need to mesh what we teach with what the real world is doing. Information should be put in context so it is more relevant and interesting."

In answer to this paradigm shift, the HyperQuest activities center around the four "I" concepts: inquiry, investigation, integration, and interaction. HyperQuests can be used to:

- ◆ introduce new concepts
- ◆ introduce new technologies
- ◆ enrich already developed curriculum
- ◆ provide a performance-based assessment for the teacher to share with parents

Using HyperQuests in the classroom gives the teacher an excellent opportunity for multitasking when classroom technology is limited. HyperQuests allow the students to access and progress through a quest as time permits.



Designing a HyperQuest Activity

The overall structure of most HyperQuests is similar in design. Background information on the topic under investigation, guidance and access to useful resources and direction on activities to complete are all included on cards in what can be called the **Task Stack**. Corresponding cards where students place the information they discover or create can be called the **Project Stack**. The teacher's responsibility is to first preview and identify those resources that the students will be guided to use as part of their investigation. Next, the teacher needs to create the **task stack** which all students use to guide their activities along with the template **project stack** that contains cards for the students to use in creating their project. Our primary goal in creating these HyperQuests is not to assess students on their use of HyperStudio tools, but rather to assess how they gather, evaluate and synthesize the information the task stack guides them to. In some quests, students are given sequential guidance to complete their project stack. Each instruction/task card, for the students would have Background Information and the Task (*Figure 1*). Students would read and determine what they will create on their Project Card. Students use the Project Card Button to take them to their project stack to record their findings. Each instruction and student project card have corresponding numbers in the bottom right-hand corner. When finished with a project card, students click on the Task Button to return to their instruction card. Before attempting another task, students should proofread the instructions to be sure they have completed their card correctly. Students continue on with their research project by clicking on an icon to take them to the next instruction card in a sequential manner. Typically this type of HyperQuest would have students complete all of the tasks included.



Figure 1

A second form of a HyperQuest would use a more interactive design where a “menu” or “navigation” card would allow student choice in the selection of tasks. This design would allow teachers to modify the number of tasks required based on student ability but it would also eliminate a HyperQuest design where each task builds on information discovered in a previous task. The steps listed beginning on the next page give a complete “roadmap” of the steps necessary in creating the Task Stack portion of a HyperQuest where a wide variety of resources have been identified for student use. Keep in mind that HyperQuests could be designed with only a single resource (such as the Internet) being used by students.



Here is an example of the steps you might use if you were to create a HyperQuest that has students investigating information on volcanoes and the four ways they erupt. The first step is to create the “task” cards for students.

1. Create individual cards to display information or links to information that you want your students to explore in their pursuit of the investigation topic. These cards should contain only one type of resource (text, laserdisc sequences, Internet connections, etc.) per card to help students organize their information. This activity will take the teacher a significant amount of time to review and gather the resources that the students are expected to use.

For this sample HyperQuest, the cards might be designed as follows:

Card 1: Create a title card that gives the topic of the HyperQuest (*Figure 2*).



Figure 2

Card 2: Create a navigation card showing buttons and tools that are available for the student to use throughout the HyperQuest (*Figure 3*). There could be instances where you can combine the design of the introductory material and the navigation buttons into one card, particularly if you only include a few tasks in the “quest”.



Figure 3

Card 3: Present introductory material on volcanoes for the students to use as background information before they begin their HyperQuest. This sample screen includes icons for student choice on the various tasks included in this investigation (*Figure 4*).



Figure 4



Card 4: Have students locate the article titled “Mountains of Fire” in the March, 1998 issue of National Geographic World and read for information on types of eruptions and the “Ring of Fire” (*Figure 5*). Notice in the design of this card how we’ve included “snapshots” of the print material students are asked to read to act as visual cues. The icons included on the card allow the students to choose to return to the menu card or move to their corresponding project card.



Figure 5

Card 5: In this sample HyperQuest, students do not have much of an opportunity to use a digital camera to capture images, but a scanner can be used to bring any original drawings into the project (*Figure 6*). Notice the consistent navigation icons.



Figure 6

Card 6: Students will view four laserdisc sequences on volcano eruptions and will need to describe the various types in their project (*Figure 7*). In addition, students are asked to create two buttons showing laserdisc sequences in their completed project. *Instructions on how to control laserdisc players via HyperStudio are included on page 14, in the Tips and Hints section.*



Figure 7



Card 7: Internet sites (pages, images, audio, and multimedia objects) are major resources that can be used in HyperQuests. In this sample, students will travel to “guided” sites to search for information related to the topic of volcanic eruptions (*Figure 8*). The expectation is that the students will not find the necessary background material on the initial page of the site, but will have to follow links to be successful. Students will have the option of writing a narrative or summation of the information found, but are required to create a minimum of three buttons that link to Internet pages or images containing information supportive of their project.



Figure 8

These cards illustrate how a teacher can use HyperStudio to guide students to only those Internet sites that have been previewed to guarantee authentic and relevant information. Keep in mind that our goal is not to have students learn to search the Internet or evaluate the contents of Web pages with these HyperQuests, but rather to guide the students to appropriate resources and assess them on their ability to evaluate and synthesize those known information sources. With the Internet now having grown to over 800 million pages, 83% of which are commercial in content and only 6% informational and educational in nature, it's critical to guide the students so that their limited online time is used as efficiently as possible. *Information on how to connect to Internet sites via HyperStudio and the NetPage NBA are included on page 14, in the Tips and Hints section.*

Card 8: The use of email to pose questions to identified experts or to correspond with a mentor can be facilitated through a card designed to automate those connections (*Figure 9*). Through the use of the NetPage NBA, a button can be created that directs mail to the appropriate person(s) you've identified as resources for your students.



Figure 9



Card 9: Many HyperQuests will lend themselves to the creation of animations on the students' part or the use of motion video to explain a topic more thoroughly. As sampled on this card, the students are required to create an animation that simulates one of the four eruption types (*Figure 10*) on their own project card.



Figure 10

Card 10: There probably are a variety of CD-ROM disks available to support many of your HyperQuests. This card shows a sample of having connections in HyperStudio start a CD-ROM encyclopedia and requires the students to search for volcano information and view the images included to look for volcanic eruptions (*Figure 11*). *Information on how to have HyperStudio control CDs and launch other software programs are included on page 13, in the Tips and Hints section.*



Figure 11

Designing your own HyperQuest is your opportunity to use HyperStudio to help guide your students in their investigations of a wide variety of units of study and also enables you to guide their use of various technology components in support of those activities.

2. Once the task (or resource) portion of the HyperQuest is completed in a fashion similar to what was described above, a student template **project stack** for the multimedia writing needs to be designed. Remember that our goal is not to assess students on their HyperStudio skills, but rather to ensure them success in their investigation of the topic of the HyperQuest. The cards contained in the **project stack** should follow relatively closely to the resources given in the HyperQuest, although students have the freedom to add cards as needed to complete their project. The buttons on the HyperQuest that show a link to the "project stack" will take students to the corresponding cards here. It's also important to place buttons on the project stack that return the students to the HyperQuest for continued use of the resources.



The student project stack might be organized like this for the HyperQuest described above:

Card 1: Create a title card for the multimedia writing project stack. Students can be encouraged to individualize this card as an introduction to their project and perhaps use a digital camera to place their picture on it (*Figure 12*).

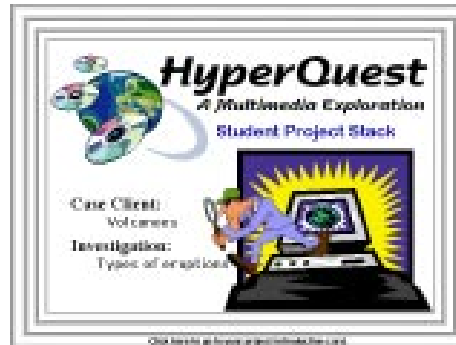


Figure 12

Card 2: This card can serve as a menu to the rest of the template cards (*Figure 13*). The template cards will follow the same format as the HyperQuest “task” stack. The buttons from the HyperQuest “task” stack take the student to this “project” stack and all of the template cards in this stack need to have a button to take the student back to the HyperQuest “task” stack.



Figure 13

An alternative to this “menu card” design of the student project stack would be to make the cards linear, that is, each task/project card combination needs to be completed before moving to the next task. This process would allow students to experience how one piece of information can lead to additional discoveries.

Card 3 (and subsequent cards): This sample shows how the individual student cards can be arranged to allow them to add their information as they obtain it to their multimedia writing project stack (*Figure 14*). Your design should include a **project** card for each resource type presented in the HyperQuest **task** stack. The students can add more cards as the need arises. You can add text boxes and instructions to the cards as necessary to help ensure student success as they work more independently. Subsequent template cards in the student **project** stack would be created in a similar fashion.

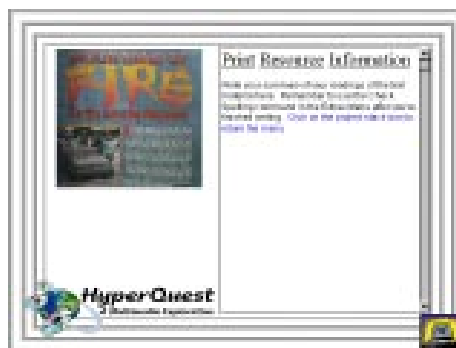


Figure 14



- The time needed for students to complete their HyperQuest depends on the number of resources you've provided students to use in the HyperQuest and the quality of work you wish to receive. Evaluation is a critical component of the overall HyperQuest experience, so have your expectations set and communicated to the students before they start the project.

This gives a fairly complete example of a HyperQuest that makes use of a significant number of resources. Certainly a HyperQuest can evolve over time and I encourage you to begin with a version that perhaps uses only one or two resource types to see what success your students have with the process. Although this takes quite a bit of setup work by the teacher at the beginning, the quality of work that the students can produce in an efficient manner will make the task seem very gratifying. Sample HyperQuests are available for you to download on the HyperQuest Internet site (k-12.pisd.edu/HyperStudio/HyperQuest.html).

Please be willing to share any HyperQuests you complete. Your experience will undoubtedly be valuable for the next person who attempts this process. Fully designed HyperQuests are available from the HyperStudio Network (www.hsnetwork.com).

Assessments for HyperQuests

As educators we know assessment is an essential component of any classroom environment. We also know there is a need for a variety of assessments to better understand how students are progressing. Many educators are placing performance assessment at the top of their list to best evaluate students' understanding of specific concepts. Even though there is a need for standardized testing and traditional assessments such as: multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer, performance assessments give us more complete evidence as to what students have actually learned. Completing a HyperQuest is one way to assess students' ability to apply what they have learned to create a product. Assessing the HyperQuest itself requires new thought and new rubrics designed for multimedia writing.

The fact that a HyperQuest requires students to create work of their own by being responsive to the resources made available to each particular task is an excellent model of performance assessment design. As HyperQuests are utilized, teachers are able to observe actual student performance and evaluate performance on previously established criteria. When HyperQuests are used in the classroom, students are assessed on both the process and the end results of their work. Many times a HyperQuest will include real-life tasks, which require students to use higher-order thinking skills to complete their quests. Students completing a HyperQuest are assessed on their accomplishment of completing a content rich HyperStudio stack. It is our job to help students see the importance of completing tasks to the best of



their ability. HyperQuests enable students to improve their performance by completing tasks that are designed to encourage quality products.

If HyperQuests are going to be used as one type of performance assessment, teachers must have assessment tools that encourage student success. Rubrics, checklists, and self-assessments are valuable tools to help the teacher/student evaluate performance. Rubrics and checklists should be given to students as the task is assigned so they know exactly what is expected. As teachers create rubrics they may choose to include students in the process. Even though there are a variety of generic rubrics available to educators, there is a need for teachers to create their own. When creating a rubric, keep in mind it is not a grading system but a way to set expectations for high quality work. Rubrics should be designed with the following elements incorporated:

- ◆ Levels of excellence
- ◆ Specific criteria
- ◆ Specific indicators that describes what the various levels of excellence look like for each criteria

When creating levels of excellence always include an even number of levels. This forces a judgement and does not allow for a “middle of the scale” decision. Words or numbers can represent levels. Select specific criteria that focus on quality of the performance the students have demonstrated by completing the HyperQuest. When deciding on indicators, be sure they are descriptive but not judgmental. Indicators should give a clear picture as to what the level looks like in the finished product. Shown below is a sample of a rubric that could be used to evaluate a HyperQuest. Keep in mind however, specific criteria will change according to the types of tasks the students are asked to complete in their quest.

	Novice	Apprentice	Professional	Master
Content Accuracy	No relevant content	Some content was reported accurately	Most findings reported accurately	All findings reported accurately
Task Directions	Did not complete any task as directed	Completed some tasks correctly	Completed all tasks correctly	Completed all tasks correctly and elaborated on most
Product Quality	Incomplete sentences with little or no punctuation, no creativity displayed when adding art work or graphics	Some complete sentences with some punctuation mistakes, some creativity displayed when adding art work or graphics	Most sentences complete with few punctuation mistakes, creativity displayed on most added art work or graphics	Complete sentences with proper punctuation, creativity displayed on all added artwork or graphics



Student Evaluation Checklist for HyperQuests

HyperQuest Investigation _____

Evaluator's Name _____

Project areas to check:

Completeness

1. All assigned task cards completed on corresponding project cards _____
2. All work proofed for grammar, spelling and multimedia content _____
3. Used required resources on each project card _____
4. Completed project stack operates as an independent presentation _____

Classroom Work

1. If a collaborative project, have all members had an opportunity to experience all the technologies used? _____
2. Have all students been given adequate preparation in the technologies they're expected to use? _____
3. Have students attempted to determine the authenticity and validity of all sources used? _____
4. Are all sources cited properly and credit given where due? _____

Design

1. Project stack contains basic parts: title screen, menu or navigation card, original writing and art as required _____
2. Pleasant contrast between text, buttons, and backgrounds _____
3. Text used is easy to read (consider fonts, sizes, colors and styles) _____
4. Navigation buttons all operate correctly _____

Creativity

1. Original artwork has been used as well as other art in creative ways to illustrate the project _____
2. Writing samples are interesting and contain information related to the defined task _____
3. Included art, sound, video and other multimedia elements are consistent with the project card theme _____
4. Has the appropriate balance of graphics and sound versus text been used? _____

For a comprehensive look at rubrics visit the following site:
(www.interactiveclassroom.com/neg-cont.html)



HyperQuest Hints and Tips

HyperStudio is a very versatile authoring tool, not only because of its ease of use, but also because of the way it allows you to control devices such as CDs and laserdiscs and even Internet connections and objects. This section is devoted to a variety of hints and tips that will allow your HyperQuests to give even more options to students in their choice of resources to use as investigative tools.

Using data CDs and other applications from HyperStudio

As you prepare your task cards for student use you may want them to access a CD-ROM, such as an encyclopedia from within the HyperQuest or possibly start another program (such as Microsoft Word) to complete an activity. Rather than have students start the CD or other program from the Task Bar or Application Menu, follow these steps to place an action on your card that starts the CD or program without leaving HyperStudio.

The steps....

1. To launch a data CD or other application in your HyperQuest, create a new button or an action on a graphic item. From the Actions dialog box, select Another Program (*Figure 15*).



Figure 15

2. From the Launch Options Menu click on either "Choose" button to select the application or document you want to start when the action is initiated (*Figure 16*).

Notice in this example how the application "gme98.exe" has been selected.

When this action is selected from the card, the CD-ROM version of Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia will start and look for the CD in the local drive. You cannot direct students to an individual article on the CD - this action simply starts the CD menu program, but it does make it easy for students to use this type of resource without using a method outside of the HyperQuest task cards. Any other application you wished to be selected in this manner (such as Microsoft Word) would be built in a similar fashion.

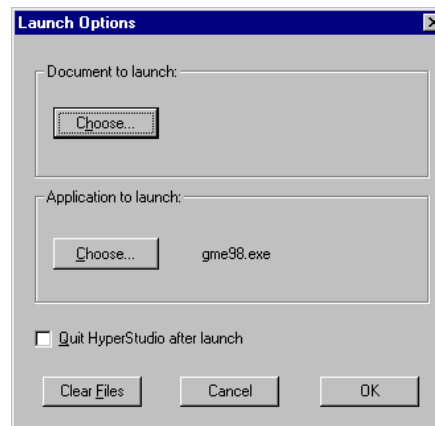


Figure 16



Controlling laserdisc players from HyperStudio

If you have laserdisc resources that you want students to view as part of a HyperQuest, you can build actions that will send the proper frame number or sequence directly to your laserdisc player from HyperStudio. This will prevent students from using the remote control or bar code reader to browse the laserdisc for clips other than those that you've found to support the unit of study. This does require that your laserdisc player be connected directly to a computer using a CC-04 cable (Macintosh) or CC-13 cable (Windows PC).

The steps....

1. To add a laserdisc sequence to your project, create a button or action on a graphic item. From the Actions dialog box, select Play a movie or video.
2. From the Video/Movie Source dialog box, choose Laserdisc player (*Figure 17*). You'll be presented with a "remote control" where you can control which sequence of frames you want displayed from your laserdisc player each time the button is pressed (*Figure 18*).



Figure 17



Figure 18

Connecting to Internet resources from HyperStudio

The NetPage NBA provides HyperStudio with a method of connecting to live Internet resources when using buttons or other object actions. Since HyperStudio is not an Internet browser, NetPage simply takes any Internet universal resource locator (URL - commonly called an "address") and passes the address off to either Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer. The browser then displays the Internet information contained at that address. In some ways, the process is like a "tag team" where HyperStudio and your browser work together.

One of the most valuable applications of the NetPage NBA is to create "guided access" stacks with button connections only to sites that support units of study directly. This not only saves valuable online time by having students and staff go directly to sources that have proven content, but also tends to keep everyone from "browsing" as much which happens when using a search engine to find information.



The NetPage NBA is the connection to Internet resources of all types: pages, images, sounds, movies and even other HyperStudio stacks! Any resource that is usable by an Internet browser is also able to become part of a NetPage link.

The following steps are necessary to create an Internet connection in HyperStudio:

1. Gather the addresses of the Internet resources you plan to create connections to. These can be copied from the Location box of your browser application and saved to a word processing file for later use.
2. Create a button or object action in HyperStudio.
3. Select New Button Actions from the Actions Menu (*Figure 19*).

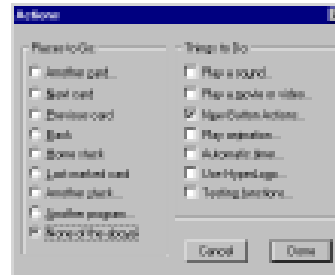


Figure 19

4. Select NetPage from the list of Names presented (*Figure 20*).

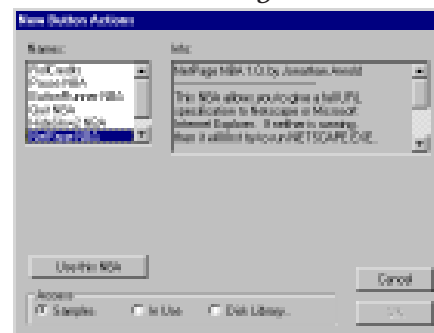


Figure 20

5. Select the Use this NBA button and then paste or type the Internet address (URL) into the Do URL dialog box (*Figure 21*).

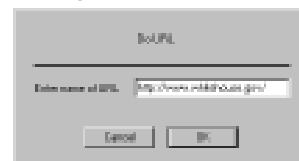


Figure 21

The button or action created will connect to that Internet (or intranet) address via Netscape (or Internet Explorer) each time you press it. The process described above does not need live Internet access if you've gathered the addresses in a word processing file. Live access is needed only when you actually use the buttons to display the Internet resources. It's always a good idea to have your Internet browser started before you try your NetPage buttons. More complete information on these types of connections can be found in the book, *HyperStudio and the Internet*, available from the HyperStudio Network (www.hsnetwork.com).



Key Elements in Active, Student-Centered Classrooms

What can be done to help promote student success when using the concepts of HyperQuests? The following nine elements can contribute greatly to teachers and students experiencing a successful learning environment. Each one relates to all the others to produce the best classroom setting possible.

Student-Centered

In a student-centered classroom students learn through discovery and take responsibility for their learning. The teacher is a facilitator of learning while students are actively involved in a non-threatening learning environment. Students feel comfortable asking questions and taking chances while they participate in a curriculum that captivates, motivates, and challenges them.

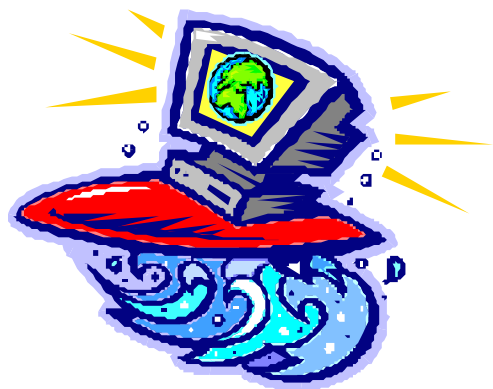
Relevant Content

Not only should the curriculum be motivating and challenging, it must be age appropriate for the students. Concepts should be introduced as students are developmentally ready to learn them. Be careful not to push too quickly through concepts that may be needed as building blocks for the student's learning at a later time. Concepts should be integrated and taught when it is relevant to the learning task. The content must provide real-world applications for the students and also provide opportunities for them to take their learning to the application level.



Technology

As opportunities arise for adding technology to the classroom, be sure to include a variety of resources. Students must be able to use a variety of technologies and utilize different types of software. Most importantly, the technology must be integrated into the curriculum content. Students should have technology accessible to them when necessary to help them experience a higher level of learning or to assist them in producing quality work. When integrated into the curriculum regularly, technology becomes a tool for students to enhance their learning.



Multiple Activities

As activities are planned, teachers must keep in mind all of the different learning styles of the students. A variety of activities to meet these different learning styles must be planned. At the same time, these activities must meet all the multiple intelligences as students' strengths lie in different areas. As many of our classrooms consist of a heterogeneous group of students, there must be a combination of both long term and short term activities to meet their needs.

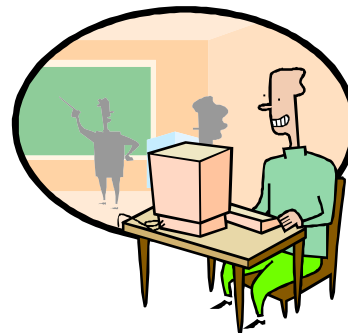
Choices for Learning

In order for students to take responsibility for their learning, they must be given the opportunity to make choices. We must prepare our students for the real world by allowing them to make decisions and solve problems on their own. While in the classroom we can encourage student choice in activities, uses of technologies, ways of participating, and methods of presenting their discoveries. Though these decisions should not always be made by the students, it is necessary for them to be an active participant in their learning. Teachers must give up some of their control to allow individual choices among the students.



Enriched Environment

When visiting a classroom that we would consider to have an enriched environment, you would see students participating in hands-on activities, current class products being displayed, and perhaps students engaged in activities that take them outside the physical classroom. At appropriate times you would see resource people sharing their knowledge about a specific concept relevant to the content being taught. Teachers must continually strive towards having an enriched environment that allows students to reach their maximum level of learning. To have this enriched environment, a teacher must not teach from printed text alone. Children learn from their experiences and should be given the opportunity to share those experiences with others.



Adequate Time

There never seems to be enough time in the day for students to learn what needs to be taught. However, teachers must allow adequate time for students to complete projects, participate in meaningful discussions, and reflect on their learning. We must model "quality vs. quantity" as students participate in activities. Teachers must allow for the teachable moment as it presents itself in the classroom. If we are truly allowing students to learn through discovery, there will be many teachable



moments that arise. Teachers must realize it is appropriate to skip a planned activity if the teachable moment is relevant to the activity in progress and the students are truly involved in learning. We must continually remind ourselves of the saying, "Less is More." Students will retain what they learned and have a more positive learning experience if we don't try to force too many concepts into a day of learning.

Multitasking

How can we manage to teach all that is required for students to learn and keep a stress free environment for our students? Multitasking allows for multiple activities to take place at one time, integration of technologies, implementation of flexible grouping, and the teacher to be a facilitator.



As you visit a classroom where students are involved in active learning, you will undoubtedly see multitasking taking place. Multitasking in a classroom setting refers to the ability for groups of students or individuals to be working on different projects/activities in different areas of the classroom at the same time. Multitasking allows for two things to happen in the classroom. First, it allows students to complete tasks according to their learning style and gives them a variety of activities to participate in to accomplish a goal. Secondly, multitasking allows the teacher to maximize the effectiveness of teaching. As brain research has showed us, not all students learn the same way. Teachers must offer a variety of tasks for students to achieve the goals that are expected of them. Multitasking allows the teacher to maximize the effectiveness of teaching. If all students are doing the same activity at the same time, there will be moments when the teacher is not needed and other moments when the teacher gets frustrated being unable to help everyone. Using multitasking in the classroom allows the teacher to make better use of time as a facilitator of learning. While the teacher monitors and instructs various groups, students benefit from the small group instruction.

As a teacher beginning to make the transition from the traditional classroom setting to one that enables active learning, you may find the following information helpful in managing multitasking in your classroom. The main key for successful management of multitasking instruction lies in clarity. Students must have a clear understanding of appropriate behaviors, tasks, and where they can turn for help if problems develop. This is not different from any traditional classroom, however in a multitasking environment students have to take more responsibility for their behavior and learning. They should rely on their peers as well as their teacher for assistance. Teachers need to provide adequate time for the tasks and should try to eliminate rigid blocks of times. Time should be built in for student sharing and the teachable moment that arises as the teacher monitors each group. While the groups are working, the teacher should ask questions to stimulate the learning that is going on in a particular group. If the teacher sees a problem developing, first let



the group members try to solve it themselves before intervening. In summary, the teacher in a multitasking classroom becomes a(n):

- ☑ **Observer:** listens to discussions from a distance and asks key questions to stimulate thinking
- ☑ **Monitor:** acts as a coach and focuses on interacting rather than intervening whenever possible, establishes a signal for noise control
- ☑ **Organizer:** makes a T-chart for both social and academic criteria, sets time limits for tasks, and adds additional minutes to lessons when needed
- ☑ **Encourager:** encourages critical thinking and creativity from all students and gives positive feedback

The physical arrangement of the classroom is very important. The classroom must allow space for group projects, individual work space and multimedia capabilities. If the multitasking environment is to be successful it must be an enriched place for students to immerse themselves in reality. The environment should provide hands on opportunities, provide books, reference materials, and access to various technologies. With this enriched environment in mind, a multitasking classroom will prepare students for real-world roles by teaching them how to participate in discussions, plan and carry out tasks, and feel comfortable using technology.

Varied Assessment Strategies

With multiple activities integrated into the curriculum, teachers must also focus on using a variety of assessment strategies. Standardized assessments are meant to be used as a diagnostic tool for the teacher. Because these types of tests limit the student's ability to apply knowledge in a real-world situation, they should only be used to determine the student's ability to perform a specific task. Alternative assessments allow students to create a response to a given situation by giving a short answer, oral presentation or other responses that allow for student explanation. Performance assessments are a final type of assessment that allows a teacher to observe and evaluate actual student performance of a specific task.

With each of these key elements implemented in classrooms, student success is not far behind. As teachers' roles change, so must the total classroom environment. Choosing one or two of these elements won't make for a successful learning environment. Each teacher's goal must be to work toward embedding all the key elements into the classroom. The teacher and the students will benefit from this engaging environment.

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