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Lander University's

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# White Board



Become An Effective Teacher & Save Your Valuable Teaching Time and Energy

Center for Effective Undergraduate Teaching (864) 388-8426

## Accountability: Required

Hold students accountable for day-to-day learning and watch end of the year test scores increase. Unfortunately traditional teaching has not encouraged students to see the connection between daily classwork and learning. That's because there is no systematic accountability for that work. Students are accustomed to "doing" an assignment and getting credit for the "doing" rather than the learning.

We all know that having an assignment such as a worksheet filled out does not necessarily indicate students have learned anything. Sometimes it just means they sit with the right people at lunch, or can fill out paperwork while watching television at home.

If students can get enough daily work "done" to offset low test scores, it is possible (sadly) to pass a course while learning very little if anything about the subject matter. Theoretically you could go through twelve years of this and come out with a diploma and little else.

Hold students accountable. Give credit for actual learning, rather than for doing. Daily quizzes, either oral or written, are easily administered. Choose one question at random from the assignment and give a grade based on that assessment. Choose two of their ten vocabulary words and award points on the two words. Write sample math problems on index cards, have the students draw a card, complete the problem and award homework points based on that sample of work.

In the beginning, students may be shocked, even angry at the change in strategy. But stick to your policy, explain the reason, and eventually your students will actually come to appreciate the fact that you care enough about them to value the time they've spent on learning.

by Dr. Kathie F. Nunley  
[HelpForTeachers.com](http://HelpForTeachers.com)

## Why Hands-on Tasks are Good

Tactile, or 'hands-on', activities benefit everyone and should be plentiful and encouraged with all students. The reason for this relates to the two different memory systems in our heads. One is called the semantic memory and the other is the episodic memory. They are actually in two different locations in the brain.

Semantic memory is composed of those things we have specifically set out to learn and remember, such as "who was the 1st president of the United States?" or "how many stars are there on the flag?" Or, "what is 6 times 3?" All of us were taught the answers to these questions and we intentionally set out to remember them. We stored them in our semantic memory.

But if I ask you "what did you have to eat last night?" or "where were you last Christmas?" Or "what is your most memorable birthday?" You would also be able to answer these questions. But why? Did you specifically set out to remember what you had for dinner last night in anticipation that I would ask you today? Did you go to bed repeating it over and over? No of course not, yet you remember it easily. This is information that is stored in your episodic memory (think of it as the 'episodes' of your life).

It is our autobiography of everything that has happened to us. It is unintentionally remembered.

These two systems are linked or networked together and often one will help us with the other. We know that they are completely separate in the brain however, because in some instances a person will lose one but not the other. In Alzheimer's disease, people tend to lose their episodic memory but not their semantic. So although they don't know if they have children, they do remember that there are 50 stars on the flag.

When I tell people I'm a biology teacher they usually reply..."Ughhh, all I remember about biology is that we had to dissect frogs". I find it fascinating that I get this response from so many people, even if it's been 40 years since they were in high school. Why do they remember the frogs? Possibly because it was one of the few hands-on events that they experienced that year.

It is by understanding the relationship between these two memory systems that we can see the true advantage to using "hands-on" activities in the classroom. They target both memory systems and the students have a better chance for retention.

by Kathie F. Nunley  
[HelpForTeachers.com](http://HelpForTeachers.com)

## **EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRESENTATIONS** **Mark your Calendar**

Friday, MARCH 20, 2009  
12:45-1:45 pm

"Classroom 101-  
Working with Difficult Students"  
Room JL300

Friday, APRIL 3, 2009; 12:45 - 2:00 pm  
Speaker: Amber Morgan  
Dawson Room

## WHITE BOARD

2009 Publication Dates

First Monday of the Month

January 5	July 6
February 2	August 3
March 2	September 7
April 6	October 5
May 4	November 2
June 1	December 1



Center for Effective  
Undergraduate Teaching  
Grier Student Center, 3rd floor, Room 368.  
Phone: 388-8426