Teaching Deaf Students to Become Social Scientists

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A few general principles related to active learning:

1. Our goal should be for our students (and ourselves) to build knowledge through experiences and discussions.
2. Using this belief: 1) learning is an active process and 2) learning is a dialogical process.
3. The students' own life experiences are an important element of what this belief is all about.

Multiple intelligences are important considerations for planning active learning activities. They are:

1. Visual-spatial
2. Logical-mathematical
3. Interpersonal
4. Intrapersonal
5. Musical
6. Bodily-kinesthetic
7. Linguistic
8. Naturalist

Learning styles is another consideration. The four styles that are discussed are:

1. Sensing-Thinking (ST)
2. Intuitive-Thinking (NT)
3. Sensing-Feeling (SF)
4. Intuitive-Feeling (NF)

And here is Bloom's Taxonomy of Thinking Skills:

Understanding   Remembering or memorizing facts

Comprehension   Understanding the information

Application   Use information in new situations

Analysis   Recognizing hidden meanings, patterns

Synthesis   Use old ideas to create new ones

Evaluation   Assess the new ideas and its value

This quote goes with the learning pyramid:

Tell me and I will forget.
Show me, and I will remember.
Involve me, and I will understand.

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Self-Efficacy

According to Albert Bandura (social cognitive theory), self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her capability to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1977)

In other words,

• People set up expectations about their own performance levels

• The higher a person's self-efficacy, the more likely they are to accept challenges and overcome difficulties

• A person who gives up easily may have a lower self-efficacy than someone who perseveres (Kelly, Short, Bosley (power point presentation, 2006)

People with a strong sense of self-efficacy:

• View challenging problems as tasks to be mastered

• Develop deeper interest (and be engaged) in the activities in which they participate

• Form a stronger sense of commitment to their interests and activities (because they feel they can be successful)

People with a weak sense of self-efficacy:

• Avoid challenging tasks

• Believe that difficult tasks and situations are beyond their capabilities

• Focus on personal failings and negative outcomes

• Quickly lose confidence in personal abilities (Bandura, 1994)

Some strategies:

• Verbal persuasion gives learners information they interpret and evaluate, and can have a positive impact on efficacy

• Learner control in certain activities, such as computer based, self-paced tasks, can contribute to efficacy

• Sensitivity to reactions allows teachers to address learner concerns and refocus their energy (Kelly, Short, Bosley, (power point presentation, 2006)

Students need to believe that their teachers are "competent and capable professionals." (Maxim, 2010)
The bottom line is to promote the "can do" attitude among our students and a very positive, student-centered learning environment.

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Developing Reading Skills from the Social Studies Text

To develop subject area literacy, the students must be able to:

1. Identify what they already know about the topic

2. Raise questions about what they do not know

3. Predict what the text will be about

4. Predict what information will be found in the passage

5. Relate new information to previous knowledge

6. Focus their attention on the reading task

(Maxim, 2010)

Sample Unit: "Saving the Whales"

S-F Approach (Interpersonal)
Discussion questions:

1. Have the students discuss their thoughts and opinions on the importance of whales to our environment.
2. If any students have gone on a whale watch, have them discuss their experience from observing the whales.

S-T Approach (Mastery)
Activities based on facts:

1. Have the students list as many species of whales they can find.
2. Have the students list the whales that are in danger of becoming extinct.

N-T Approach (Understanding)
Research and debate activities:

1. Have the students choose a particular kind of whale and write a research paper about them.
2. Have the students lead a debate on the importance of whales and if they should be saved.

N-F Approach (Self-Expression)
Creative, imaginative activities:

1. Ask the students to plan a "Save the Whales" campaign and let them develop their own strategies.
2. Ask them to imagine what it would be like if there were no whales.

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