

VAI EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

Meaningful Learning: Creating Memorable and Fun Learning Experiences



When it comes to teaching, our pedagogy is molded out of professional theories and practices paired up with our own personality and flair to assemble what we believe to be the epitome of solid teaching and learning. Through practice and reflection, we test a variety of ways to help students learn, keeping strategies that brought the most success and weeding out those that didn't.

Eventually, we learn to answer the question at the core of teaching: how can we make learning meaningful for our students? They are constantly wondering, "When am I ever going to use this?" and they evaluate the relevance of the content through the answers they find. Meaningful learning experiences are essential, and can be categorized into three domains: relevance, experience, and impact. When we make content relevant to students' lives, create experiences that are valuable and rich, and provide learning opportunities that have an impact, meaningful learning is bound to happen.

Relevance

Make content relatable.

Instruction should be designed with students' prior knowledge in mind. Using analogies, metaphors, and practical examples enables students to connect material to knowledge they already possess and experiences they have had.

Don't underestimate inspiration.

Often instruction becomes relevant and interesting simply because a teacher exudes passion for the topic. A teacher can provide a personal connection to ideas that students may initially perceive as foreign. A great teacher can inspire us to see relevance where we thought there was none. What is it that you love? How can you connect that to what you have to teach?

Lead with engagement.

Any topic can be quite interesting when you launch your exploration with an [engagement hook](#). Instruction that effectively utilizes elements such as conflict, surprise, stories, mystery, puzzles, etc. is assured to generate significant learner interest while also helping to manufacture a strong learner desire to know.

Experience

Make play a part of their day.

Play is essential to growth and development, and active student participation in the learning process can create meaning and interest. Providing students with [opportunities for play](#) allows them to make connections with the learning concepts and construct meaning in a way that is both useful and purposeful.

Give students choice.

Providing students with some measure of meaningful choice and control over the learning process empowers them to make content relevant through their lived experience. As students develop their understanding of a subject they will often begin to identify with the ideas and see them as personally valuable. Explore a variety of strategies to boost [Student Ownership](#) through choice!

Provide authentic experiences.

When students can see that what they are learning in class is important and useful out in the community and world around them, they draw the connection that what they are learning has utility value.

Impact

Make learning involved.

Active student participation in the learning process can also create meaning and interest. As students get involved in the nitty gritty of the learning, they visibly grow in their understanding of content and can make direct connections to why this content is important and impactful in the world in which they live.

Make learning matter.

When students see that their learning can directly impact the world in positive ways, they learn that the content is both valuable and essential to being a successful citizen. The experience then becomes just as important as the learning. And that type of learning cannot be done without that valuable experience.



Meaningful Learning and PBL

MOMENTS TO Remember

Every Blue Apple project empowers students to learn in meaningful ways. In Moments to Remember, for instance, students form connections with senior citizens, and then use their learning to create biographies that their new friends will cherish forever. [Check it out!](#)

If you'd like to try this project, check out these resources:

- This [Project Overview](#) provides a lesson by lesson summary of this project.
- Here is a [Recommended Book List](#) of rich, diverse literature on the topic of respectful discourse.
- Check out [K-8 content standard connections](#) for this project.
- To see this project in action, check out the [project video](#).



Conclusion

Meaning is at the heart of teaching. By considering relevance, experience, and impact, you can help bring meaning to the heart of your teaching and your students' learning.

**[Click here](#) if you would like to see a FREE 30-minute webinar of this content:
Meaningful Learning: Creating Memorable and Fun Learning Experiences**

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Each Blue Apple Project Includes:

- Engaging lessons designed to make learning memorable, meaningful, and fun
- Curated online resources to save you time searching for content
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- Videos and contact info provided by real-world experts willing to meet with your students
- Collaboration opportunities with other classrooms
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