

Students are often surprised when they hear about the wonderful achievements of graduates from their own school. Usually, once students graduate from high school, they are forgotten unless they do indeed achieve something newsworthy. This activity gives students an opportunity to dig deep into their school's history, discover its heroes, and honor them and their accomplishments by creating an alumni wall.

Materials

- ▶ Stationery, writing paper, and pencils or pens
- ▶ Tape or thumbtacks

Instructions

1. Inform your students that they are going to create an alumni wall.
2. Have students gather information about several high-achieving graduates from their school who are not friends or relatives. Tell students they may have to do a bit of work in order to track these people down.
3. Make sure you encourage the students to research alumni from all different generations.
4. Once they have located their alumni, have the students write letters to them, explaining the project and asking them for interviews.
5. Tell students that, during their interviews, they should ask the alumni what they have been doing since high school.
6. Have students write their subjects' biographies and post them on the alumni wall with tape or thumbtacks. Encourage students to think of a creative title for the display.

Discussion

1. What is the most interesting thing you learned about the alumni you chose?
2. What would you like your alumni biography to say?
3. What surprised you about your alumni?

Enrichment

Create an alumni Web site, where alumni can register and find each other. Notify the alumni of the Web site once it has been created.

One comment that teachers often hear from students is “I’m so bored.” This activity helps students understand the roots of their boredom and the ways they can eliminate it during the school day. In the process, it also gives students some responsibility for overcoming their boredom.

Materials

- ▶ Rooting Out Boredom Worksheet
- ▶ Pencils or pens

Instructions

1. Give students the Rooting Out Boredom Worksheet and have them list their activities in the appropriate columns.
2. Tell students that, before they continue filling out the worksheet, they should think seriously about school—their experiences during an average school day, the classes they take, the homework assignments they complete, and so on. Only then should they complete the worksheet. Encourage students to really think about what makes activities boring or fun.
3. Have students share their ideas with the class.
4. Ask students how they can make boring activities more fun: How can they take responsibility for making the school day fun and exciting?

Discussion

1. What types of boring activities were most commonly mentioned by classmates?
2. What can we do as a class to reduce boredom?
3. How can learning be more exciting?

Enrichment

Solicit student input before designing some of your lessons. In other words, what do students want to learn from a specific unit? Find ways to capitalize on student interests and strengths.

Rooting Out Boredom Worksheet

Boring Activities

Fun and Exciting Activities

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

What makes these activities boring?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

What makes these activities fun and exciting?

It is often difficult to be creative when one is unprepared for the task at hand and is also facing the pressure of time constraints. This is a fun activity that forces students to be creative and literally think on their feet. Even students who are shy and don't enjoy being in front of crowds have fun with this activity.

Materials

- ▶ Enough slips of paper for everyone in the class
- ▶ A hat

Instructions

1. Prior to the activity, write various funny speech titles on the slips of paper and put them in the hat. You may use silly titles such as "Red All Over" or "My, the Sky Is Blue" or "Messy Spaghetti."
2. Inform students that they are going to draw a slip of paper from the hat and then give a 1-minute speech relating to the title they have chosen.
3. As the students get better at this activity and begin to feel more confident, think of additional titles that will make it more difficult for them to be creative in their speech making.

Discussion

1. What was challenging about this activity?
2. When else have you been in a situation where you had to think on your feet?
3. Why is speaking in front of crowds easy for some people and difficult for others?

Enrichment

This same activity can be done using sounds. In secret, give students a sound that they must describe without making that particular noise or saying the word. One example might be the sound of a car horn. Have them give a 1-minute speech and see if the class can guess what sound they are describing.

Allowing students the opportunity to teach others is a wonderful way to imbue them with an important leadership skill. This activity is a fun way to teach this particular skill and at the same time let students practice their speaking and presentation skills.

- Materials**
- ▶ Enough How-To Cards for the entire class
 - ▶ Optional: note paper and pencils or pens

- Instructions**
1. Turn the How-To Cards facedown, spread them out on a table or desk, and have each student choose one.
 2. Give students ample time to plan a presentation, and then have them teach the skill written on their How-To Card to the rest of the class.
 3. This activity can also be done in conjunction with a particular unit of study. For example, if the class is reading a book about 18th-century England, you might want to create How-To Cards that are specific to the book or the time period or both. Regardless, keep in mind that the main objective of this activity is for students to teach and not merely to write a paper or prepare a list of ideas.

- Discussion**
1. What was the most difficult part about teaching?
 2. What does a good presenter do to interest the audience?
 3. What subject would you like to teach?

- Enrichment**
- Give as many students as possible the opportunity to co-teach a lesson with you. Have students help with planning and assessing the lesson.

How-To Cards

**How to bake
chocolate chip
cookies**

How to play soccer

**How to build
a tree house**

**How to play
checkers**

**How to play
basketball**

**How to play
baseball**

**How to play
pinochle**

**How to build
a paper airplane**

**How to play
volleyball**

**How to grow
tomatoes**

**How to write
a poem**

**How to grill
a hamburger**

**How to build
a campfire**

**How to do
the breaststroke**

**How to give
a speech**

How to

How to

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How to

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