

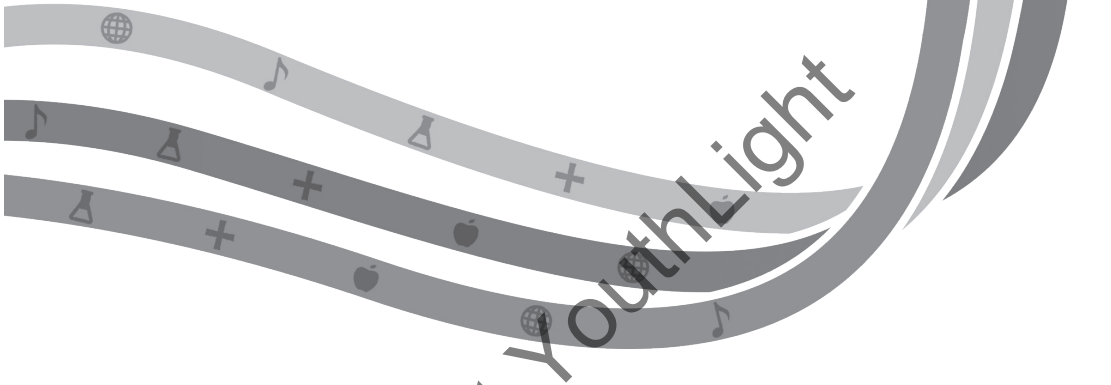
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Chapter 9

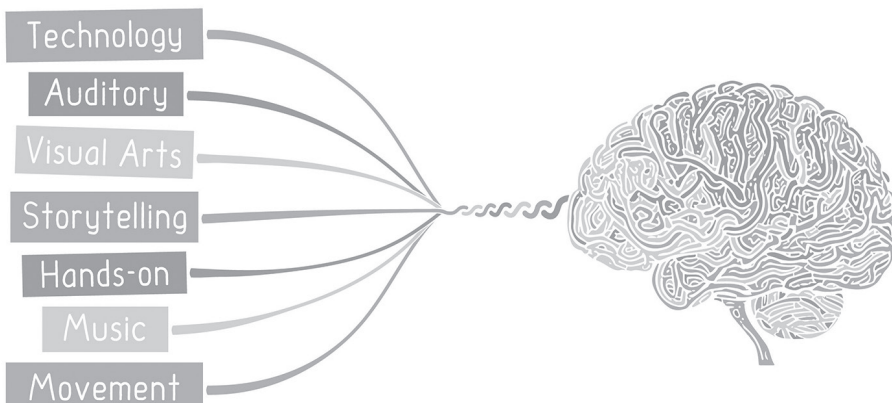
PATHWAYS IN PRACTICE

80+ Ideas for Classroom Learning Experiences to Elevate Instruction



Are you ready to embark on an exciting journey through the multiple learning pathways and teaching through experiences? Buckle up because we're about to dig into a world of endless opportunities, where creativity knows no bounds and classroom instruction is elevated from ordinary to outstanding.

In this chapter, we'll navigate through the seven learning pathways, each offering unique opportunities for elevated instruction and engaging learning experiences. From the rhythmic beats of music to the captivating elements of storytelling, the hands-on excitement of tactile learning to the immense potential of technology, there is something special in store for every type of learner.



Technology

In this section, we'll explore a variety of creative ways to use technology to create engaging and impactful learning experiences. When technology is used **PURPOSEFULLY**, it is a powerful tool to engage students and allow them to experience things that they may never get to do otherwise. So, grab your devices and get ready to embark on a journey into the exciting world of educational technology!

I. Lights, Camera, Action!

Elements: Assessment, Engagement, Content Connection, Differentiation

Materials: Tablet/computer, rubric, checklist

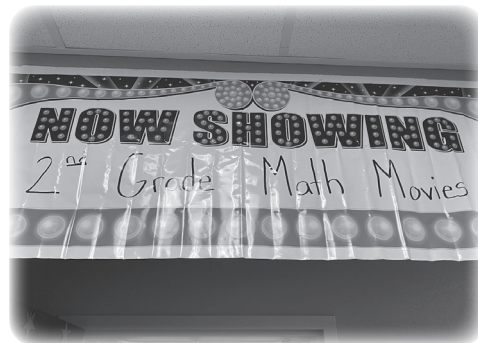
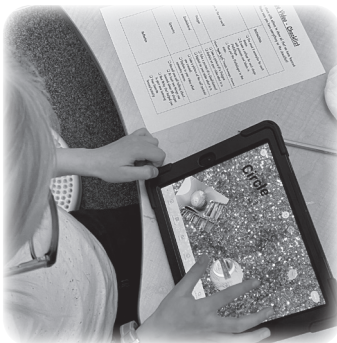
Apps: iMovie®, Clips®, Animoto®, or Shadow Puppet®

Have students create a video about their learning. This could be for a review at the end of a unit or it could be used as a "Peer Teaching" experience where each student takes a certain piece of the content and creates a video review.

Extension: Create a movie premiere for your students the day that they are to share their videos. Extend the red carpet, bring out the popcorn, and watch your students' learning come to life!

Experiences in Action

Welcome to our classroom Movie Premiere! We just completed a geometry unit in math. Students created videos to show what they had learned throughout that unit. They had a rubric and checklist that they used as guides while creating their videos. This was a great experience not only to showcase their learning but also to showcase their creativity and voice. It also served as an assessment to gauge their understanding but in a much more creative and engaging process than a multiple-choice test.



Auditory

In this section, ideas are given for the experiences educators can use to enhance the learning journey for their auditory pathway learners. Auditory learning is an approach that will engage students through hearing and listening. So, tune in (get it...), as we explore different auditory classroom learning experiences—the pathway where sound becomes a gateway to new learning and discovery.

I. Soundscapes

Elements: Engagement, Content Connection, Differentiation, Assessment

Materials: Computer/tablet/smartphone, speakers (optional)

Integrating soundscapes into the classroom as a learning experience opens up a world of auditory exploration for students. From the busy streets of a city to the peacefulness of a forest, soundscapes provide an elevated backdrop for learning across different subject areas or topics. Through listening activities, students are able to deepen their understanding of the world around them. Soundscapes are also a powerful tool for sparking creativity and imagination. Whether it's enhancing a science lesson with the sounds of an ecosystem, or setting the mood for a literature study, soundscapes elevate the learning experience, making learning truly come alive through the pathway of sound.

Experience in Action

Students had been learning about different habitats and ecosystems. After introducing information on each of the ecosystems, the teacher put together a playlist of just sounds heard in each of the ecosystems discussed. (YouTube® is a great resource for this!) The teacher put more than one sound example of each ecosystem in the playlist. Students closed their eyes and listened to the different sounds immersed in the setting. With each soundscape, the students recorded the ecosystem they heard. Students needed to use the knowledge of previously discussed ecosystems to practice their inferencing skills.

Extension: You could play these sounds as you learn about the different ecosystems individually. Students would be surrounded by this auditory experience, enhancing their learning and understanding when it might otherwise feel unobtainable or far-fetched.

Visual Arts

Visual arts learning experiences are an elevated teaching approach that brings out students' creativity and allows it to shine! Through these experiences, students can express themselves in their learning and gain a deeper understanding of the content or topic. So grab your pencils, paintbrushes, and some construction paper, and let's dive into the learning pathway of visual arts!

I. Picture Perfect Portrait!

Elements: Content Connection, Assessment

Materials: Paper, crayons or colored pencils

Adding a picture can elevate any writing, whether opinion, informational, or personal, for the publisher and the reader.

Extension: Use the app Chatterpix® to bring your picture to life. Students can take a picture of the image and use the app to record their knowledge or explain the topic. This unique activity can also be an easy and engaging alternative to assess student knowledge.

2. Journal Covers

Elements: Climate and Culture, Engagement, Differentiation

Materials: Composition notebook, magazines, scissors, glue, book tape, photos (optional)

At the start of every year, we have students create a cover for their journal. Their journal is a simple composition notebook transformed throughout the year into a journal of learning, growth, and discovery. Some ideas to include in the journal are gratitude entries, funny writing prompts, content writing, vocabulary, and pen pal letter drafts, just to name a few. Visual arts pieces are for any age, grade level, or subject area. Since this is something we have students use throughout the year, students create a cover to make it feel more personal and reflect who they are as a person and learner. All that is needed are some old magazines that students can cut up. Students should be encouraged to bring photos or pictures of things from home to add to their cover. The cover creates a photo collage filled with visuals that represent the student.



Storytelling

“Once upon a time, there was a teacher who received this magical book full of ideas that inspired her to do great things.” Stories can be integral to one’s culture, upbringing, and learning. Storytelling allows people to connect, ignites peoples’ imaginations, and can make one feel emotions ranging from joy to sorrow. Storytelling is a powerful way for students to connect with one another and connect with their learning as well!

I. Reader’s Theater: Content Version

Elements: Engagement, Content Connection, Assessment

Materials: Paper, pencil

Reader’s Theatre scripts and experiences are powerful for enhancing students’ fluency, comprehension, understanding of vocabulary, speaking and listening skills. Instead of finding pre-made scripts, give students parameters, maybe using a rubric or checklist, and have students develop their own script! For an even more elevated experience, have students create their script and performance around the curriculum topic or content. Whether it’s science, social studies, or even math, give students some creative freedom to develop a story about their learning and understanding!

Extension: Have students perform their script! You could bring in other pathways and have them create their backgrounds (visual arts), sound effects (auditory), and choreograph movements (movement) to bring their script to life!

2. Story Mapping

Elements: Engagement, Content Connections, Assessment

Materials: Paper, pencil, mentor texts

Story mapping is a fun and engaging way to guide students through the storytelling process. It helps break down a story into its key elements—like characters, setting, conflict, and resolution—allowing students to visualize the flow of the narrative. Whether they’re mapping out a favorite story or creating their own, students tap into their creativity while making personal connections to the content. Story mapping also gives teachers a clear view of student progress, helping identify strengths and areas for improvement. It’s a simple yet powerful tool that enhances both comprehension and storytelling skills in the classroom.

Hands-on

Earlier in the book, Megan shared an experience she remembers from high school. What made this learning so impactful? It was hands-on. In this section, we share many different methods to provide hands-on experiences for your students, reaching the students who learn best through this pathway.

I. "Stick" with Geometry

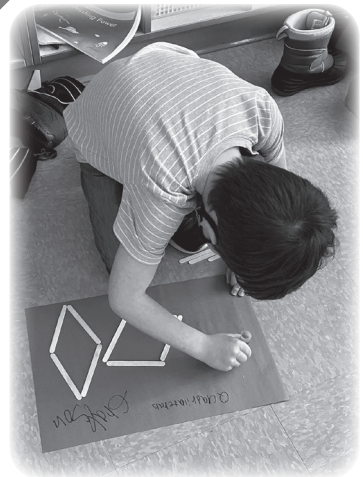
Elements: Content Connection, Engagement, Assessment

Materials: Popsicle® sticks/toothpicks, construction paper, glue

Provide students with a set amount of Popsicle® sticks. Have them create different shapes with the sticks (rectangles, rhombus, hexagon). Students can then glue these different shapes onto construction paper and label how many sides, angles, and the name of the shape. This activity could be used to introduce the topic of shapes or an assessment.

Pro Tip: Assemble individual math manipulative tubs for each student. Purchase plastic-size shoe boxes with lids at the beginning of the year, and add the manipulatives students will need immediately (counters, place value sticks, and dice). Add tools like clocks, fraction bars, or fact cards throughout your year. Providing students with individual math toolboxes allows them access to the tools they need for learning. However, when you add new tools, give a lesson on how to use them and their purpose.

This could be a simple exercise like building numbers with the place value blocks or using the clock in the first lesson and then adding it to their boxes.



Music

How often do we find ourselves saying, “I have this song stuck in my head!” Music has a way of embedding itself in our brains. Whether it’s a catchy tune from the radio, or a jingle from a commercial on TV, music has the capability to make its way into our memories and play on repeat. Why not hone the power of music to help elevate our students’ learning experiences?!

I. “Taylor’s Version”: Revised Song Lyrics

Elements: Engagement, Climate and Culture, Differentiation, Assessment, Content Connection

Materials: Soundtrack/music app, paper, pencil, rubric (optional)

App: Spotify®, Pandora® or other music app

“Shake it off, shake it off. Shake it off, shake it off. Yeah, yeah, yeah!” How many of you started singing along? Why not bring something like this—something upbeat, popular and catchy—into the classroom? Students will love the chance to be like a famous band or singer by getting an opportunity to write their own songs!

For this experience, students will take a clip from a popular song and put their learning to it! Students will deepen their understanding of the content and vocabulary to create a song/chorus that is cohesive, makes sense, and clearly expresses what they have learned. Instead of writing a summary or something similar, they create an experience by turning their learning into a song!

Extension: After students have their own “_____ Version”, put on a concert! Have students perform their song (or read it) to their classmates!

2. Poetry with Song Lyrics

Elements: Engagement, Differentiation

Materials: Poems (from texts or printed or projected), song lists, soundtracks/music app

App: Spotify®, Pandora® or other music app

Bringing poetry and song lyrics into the classroom can create an exciting experience for students that sparks their creativity and helps them connect with language! Imagine a lively classroom where students dive into the rhythms, rhymes, and vivid imagery of their favorite song lyrics and then use those ideas to write their own poems. This not only lets them explore the artistic choices of their favorite artists but also gives them a chance to express their own thoughts and feelings in a creative style. Activities like comparing themes in a song and a poem, or even

Movement

Have you ever noticed how much more enjoyable learning can be when you're up and moving? Imagine infusing that energy into your classroom with a movement pathway that has students on their feet and actively engaged in learning. Learning is not stagnant; our students shouldn't be either! It is time to get them out of their seats, move, and experience learning in an elevated way! The movement pathway brings learning alive by requiring students to get moving while mastering the material. This approach transforms your classroom into an interactive learning space where students move with purpose, and lessons become adventures they won't forget.

I. Academic Obstacle Course

Elements: Engagement, Content Connection, Differentiation, Climate and Culture

Materials: TBD based on how you want students to create their obstacle course

Have you ever watched *American Ninja Warrior*? The athletes work through many different obstacles to reach their end goal of hitting the button at the end of the course. What if you brought a little ninja warrior action into the classroom? We are not saying to set up ladders, monkey bars, or a giant rock wall. But creating a little challenge and competition inside of your instruction will certainly boost student engagement. It will also create motivation to learn the content so that they can create an obstacle course that will challenge their classmates. These obstacle courses can be created on as large or small of scale as you see fit.

To get students moving their whole bodies, give them access to different items such as hula hoops, cones, scooters, jump ropes, or bodyweight exercises. Before completing the obstacle, students need to answer questions about the content. These obstacle courses can be created and completed by students individually or in small groups. Students who have created the obstacle course need to have the question and answers prepared. At every obstacle, there are questions about the content or topic that students need to answer before completing the obstacle.

2. Step by Step

Elements: Engagement, Content Connection, Differentiation, Assessment

Materials: Tablet to record (optional)

When teaching students content or a topic that involves steps or a sequence, have them show you the sequence or order with their bodies!