

10 Warm-Up Ideas

The Evocative

This is done by giving the students an evocative quotation, photo, scenario or song. Then ask a question that requires the group or learning team to think it through and give you their best answer.

You'd be surprised at what people can come up with, and more so, how wrong they can often be. The evocative warm up strategy helps you, the teacher to understand any misconceptions or preconceptions that the students may have about the subject. Knowing what the students' preconceptions are tells us where they are now and gives us an idea of how we can get them where we want them to be.

Most importantly, it lets you know how to target the lesson, after all, it makes no sense to teach them what they are already know (unless you are deliberately using repetition) - they would just get bored.

Data Manipulation

"A picture is worth a thousand words", so with this strategy we ask the students to draw a diagram of what they currently understand about the subject or concept. The artist in them may come to light, or like me, you might just get the best of my stick figures! Either way, you are able to determine any preconceptions or misconceptions that students may have as well as who has them. The best part is that it gets the students interested enough in the subject - giving you, the teacher a great launching pad to begin the lesson.

Pre-Quiz

A quiz (even if it's ungraded) always gets the attention of students. To make it more interesting, it can be done through sign language, with a picture on construction paper, with white boards or even through poetry or rapping! Whatever it takes to get them involved and interested and of course, learning And Reading!! This, like the previous strategies, highlights any preconceptions or misconceptions that students may have, helps us target our teaching to a level that will keep them interested and most importantly it can get them interested.

Wordsplash

This strategy doubles up as a vocabulary builder. Students are given a list of words relating to the topic that you are about to teach and asked to guess how these words relate to the topic at hand. Try to choose words that they have never heard of to get them thinking!

Simulation

Some people learn by doing - and that is what simulation is all about. If simulations might be too dangerous or even inappropriate for the classroom, role playing might be a fun way to use this strategy. This warm up targets several different learning styles.

Guessing Game

This is like "Ask the Audience" in Who Wants To Be A Millionaire, only if you have some objects you can hold them up and ask what they might be used for, or what the next course of action would be, or even where the items may belong in a process. There is nothing better than seeing the hands fly up or hearing multiple voices calling out the answers to your questions. Again, it gets students interested and lets you, the teacher, know how much they know (or don't know). Sometimes it can be quite humorous!

Opinionnaire

Much like a pre-quiz, this is an assessment of how students think about a certain subject. This can really bring out any misconceptions! A good thing about this strategy is that you are able to correct any misconceptions.

Free Association

This is when the teacher calls out a word or a phrase and the students can either call out a word or sign the word that first comes to mind. For example in a health class a teacher may call out "fast food" and the students may call out or sign "McDonalds". This strategy stimulates the students to think about the topic in question and generates interest among the students. In other words, it works both as a warm up and a hook!

Likert Scale Line Up

This warm up strategy is especially useful when teaching the last class of the day. It gets everyone moving and the focus would be on lining students up based on how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement or subject. Usually the more controversial the subject, the more enthusiastic the response. Also, it would get students discussing the subject, as they would need to know to what extent their classmates agree or disagree. A great way to start a lesson!

Chalk Talk

It is extremely easy to do and more to the point, the focus is on the students! Start off by writing a word or a phrase on the board. The next step is to have a student co-ordinate his or her colleagues as they walk up to the board. They can either come up in small groups or individually to write on the board anything related to the word or phrase in question. It gets the students thinking and you can use their own ideas to launch the lesson. An excellent hook!