

Literature Review

The choice of audiovisual lessons is not only a matter of modeling the use of technology, it also meets the needs of the many audio visual learners. Visuals increase attention and spark interest, as Keller points out in the ARCS theory of learner motivation, which states that learner motivation is dependent on four factors--attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction. The goal of arousing perception and inquiry, should also be balanced with variability of presentation style (McGriff). For this reason, I plan to integrate different types of multimedia options to create the audio visual lessons, while maintaining a continuous structure of design. As Baggio points out in *The Visual Connection*, form is instrumental in keeping the viewer from getting lost, but using techniques, such as “mirrors” to wake up your learners, are equally as important (68-70, 138). Switching the location of text from one side of the screen to another, might also evolve into embedding one media into another and using different tools to create similarly styled media messages.

Recent scholarship points to the need for addressing visual learners in the classroom. Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind*, notes the shift from left-brained skills to right-brained activities, including artistry and transcendental pursuits. Pink describes the shift from the Informational Age to the Conceptual Age that requires the workers of today and tomorrow to have a balanced use of their brain. This balanced brain can be developed if teachers employ the arts of design, story, symphony, empathy, play, and meaning -- all of which are “fundamentally human attributes” that simply need to be reintroduced to the process of developing the mind (Pink, 67). In his discussion of meaning, Pink provides the example of the recent trend at medical schools to include courses in spirituality and health to better prepare doctors to treat the “whole person” with a “whole-minded approach,” while the business world is learning to align spiritual values and meaning to help organizations reach their goals (Pink, 222-224). Frequently, students complain that school-work isn't preparing them for the real-world; they feel that school is merely a maze of dead-ends that will not help them in the world of work. Facilitating learning means to replace the maze of yesterday's education experience with a labyrinth of learning -- a labyrinth, as Pink describes, is “a spiral walking course. When you enter, your goal is to follow the path to the center, stop, turn around, and walk back out -- all at whatever pace you choose” (Pink, 228). This description is the same process of learning; when one truly learns deeply, they walk through the design of knowledge, play with ideas and others, listen to and tell stories, develop understanding and empathy, and create big picture concepts from the symphony of all experiences. In other words, the process of walking through meditative practice is the same conceptually as the educational or learning process of any knowledge and its applications to the world.

Fran Grace, a college professor and contributing author to *Meditation and the Classroom*, states that

- the Labyrinth contains no tricks or dead ends. Its purpose is not to confuse but to clarify. Similar to other meditative methods, walking the Labyrinth facilitates a quieting of the left-brain thinking patterns characteristic of ordinary beta-wave activity, and it

correspondingly enhances right-brain noetic insights characteristic of alpha and theta brain activity. The Labyrinth is “nonlinear”; the path takes you through its four quadrants in a nonsequential way. Suddenly, as with life, you may find yourself in the opposite quadrant from what you expected.

She discusses the commonalities in various religious practice and understanding that is found through similar circular journeys with this inward-outward archetypal pattern, which she combines with the concepts and patterns of discursive analysis -- content-based (third-person), communal interaction -- context-based (second-person), and interior awareness -- contemplative (first-person), teaching and learning methods into a new combined pedagogical approach. She explains the increased engagement and enthusiasm of her students when she restructured her courses with techniques and practices that aligned with this three-tiered learning pattern. She specifically mentions bringing in “insiders” or guest experts, fishbowl discussions and other engaged pedagogies, and then finally contemplative practices that allowed for self-reflection and the ability to respond rather than react to the information or its context.

She concludes this discussion with the successful change within her students, who develop the “capacity to observe their mental phenomena... [allowing them to] no longer [be] the victim’s of their mind’s knee-jerk reactions to the ideas of others or their own life conditions. Struggles such as test-anxiety, attention problems, panic attacks, past resentments, or eating disorders begin to lessen their hold, and students express a new confidence as learners and sense of moral freedom as humans (Chapter 5). Grace’s process and examples align with philosophies that are exhibited in Project-Based Learning; almost all of her examples might also be found in literature from the Buck Institute for Education and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. By developing classroom and learning process structures that follow the meditative patterns that have been practiced for centuries, a teacher can better facilitate the learning process and educate the whole student.

Laurie L. Patton, in her essay that is chapter four in the same book, discusses the need for ritual that establishes the beginning and ending of “everyday acts of study.” She points to the evidence that many ancient belief systems did and still do practice “framing” of text in the form of prayer, recitation, or declarations of intent before and after study. These learning practices were lost or simply left to the religious, when the seeking of knowledge split between the religious and secular. Patton wonders if applying this ritual aspect of “contemplative studies could challenge how we frame our classrooms at both their entrance points and their exit points” and proposes that “we might connect the act of sustained attention with the disposition of rigorous analysis. We might begin and end our daily acts of learning with declarations of contemplative intention, either verbal or nonverbal.” She suggests that “creating academic rituals” might best be done by studying the rituals and learning outcomes of those experienced in contemplative studies and applying them to the regular classroom.

I consider this idea of beginnings, middles and endings of daily instruction and facilitated learning

and attempt to place rituals into the path of the labyrinth of learning that I layout for my students. My goal as an educator is to transition from the nagging old-school teacher to that of the modern facilitator who guides her students to mindfully take responsibility or ownership of their academic work.

Tony Wagner's book, *The Global Achievement Gap*, identifies the seven essential skills of the modern workplace, including the need to develop adaptability and initiative skills. Wagner also notes the results of a Gates Foundation study that revealed that "will not skill" was the main reason for a high dropout rate, suggesting that a need to foster internal motivation is necessary for student success. Motivating a student is largely dependent on the facilitator's ability to enable the student to be more than physically present in the learning environment or situation.