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The Art of Teaching

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The following list of choices may help to structure your reflection about teaching. Start by analyzing your teaching. You might circle your natural instinct (e.g. "Forward motion"), and/or shade part of the corresponding axis, reflecting what you actually do. Then think about setting goals. You can use this worksheet on your own, but you will probably get more out of it if you include it in your conversations with colleagues.

There is no one way. Within each category, there is something to say for each of the options, and for any other option on that spectrum. Learn how to navigate between the options, adjusting to the specific conditions of your class. As you gain experience, you will learn new techniques, broaden your repertoire, and gain the flexibility that makes for good teaching.

Add more categories as you become aware of them (and send me a copy!)

Course Organization

forward motion ⟷ review

discrete topics ⟷ internal cohesion

staying within your discipline ⟷ making connections

teaching to standards ⟷ differentiation

responding to the realities of the class ⟷ covering the material

responding to the realities of each class ⟷ keeping sections in sync

Lesson Planning

over-prepared ⟷ winging it

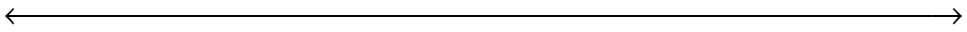
same as previous time ⟷ new approach

where did the ideas come from?

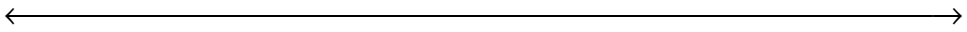
you — your department — colleagues at other schools
(the latter through journal article / conference / Internet / personal contact)

Format

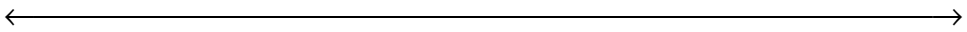
routine — variety



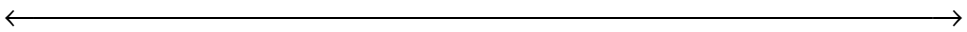
lecture — activity



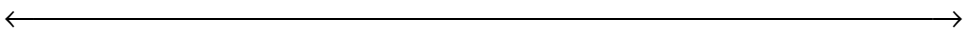
hands-on — (activities) — words-centered



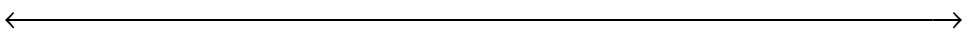
low-tech — high-tech



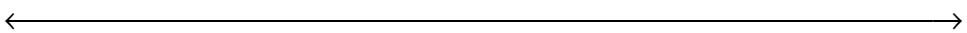
"too easy" — (working at many levels) — "too difficult"



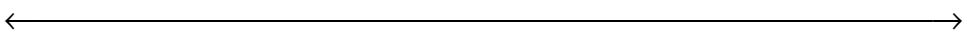
formal — (atmosphere) — informal



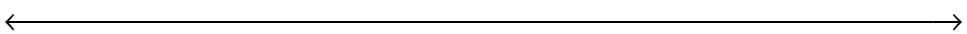
discovery — direct instruction



controlling — letting go



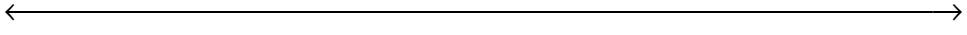
slow — (pace) — fast



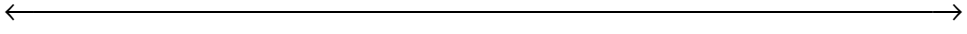
individual work / pairs / groups / whole class
talking / reading / writing

Emphasis

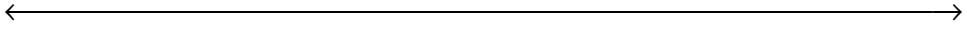
skills — understanding



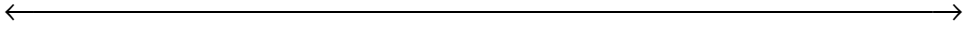
depth — breadth



enjoyment — learning

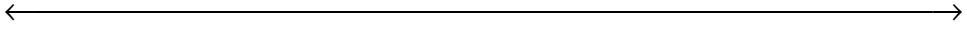


right answer — process

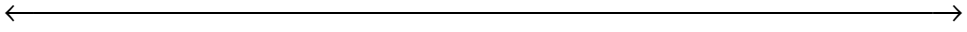


Discourse

open — questions — closed



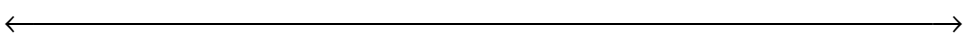
correct — answers — incorrect



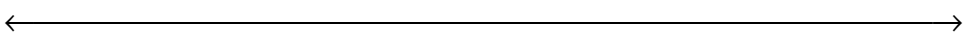
Who talks? Who listens? (Who hears?)
What determines the validity of an idea?
(teacher's authority / student consensus / published reference)

Working with Students

intrinsic — motivation — extrinsic



support — (hand-holding vs. sink-or-swim) — challenge



individual students — time and focus — whole class