

Ah...My favorite summer activity....sitting in a beach chair on Galveston Island reading a Clive Cussler novel and imagining my place in the adventure. This time, I'm deep into the hunt for medieval treasure in Pirate. All of a sudden, something bobbing in the surf catches my attention—an old bottle! I wade out to retrieve it and pull out a rolled up piece of paper. The message reads,

**Find the
PIRATE
Within you**

-- Dave Burgess

Recognizing the name of the educator/professional development/motivational speaker, I go online to see what more he has to say about finding the pirate within me. There it is: Teach Like a PIRATE! I head to the island book store and purchase a copy. (Before I begin, though, I select my pirate name from one of the many interactive pirate name sites—Captain Mary Flynn.) And so I open the book...

And, as I read the book, I realized that I had to share the ideas and philosophies of PIRATE teaching! Be ready, because you (and your students) will never be satisfied with just teaching the standards again.

Part I - Teach Like a PIRATE

- **P - Passion** Remember why you wanted to become a teacher in the first place? Remember that feeling you had when you stood before your first group of students? That's the passion you still need to bring to your classroom! Focus on passion for your content, your profession, and in your personal life. "Light yourself on fire and people will come from miles around just to watch you burn!"
- **I - Immersion** Burgess illustrates the power of immersion in teaching by highlighting the distinction between a lifeguard and a swim instructor. The lifeguard sits in an elevated seat and observes the pool, making sure no one is drowning. On the other hand, the swim instructor, at least if he or she is a good one, jumps in the pool alongside the learner, plunging into the action.
- **R - Rapport** One of the most important rocks in this chapter (for me) is the statement, "Kids can tell the difference between teachers who only seem to care about them when they are sitting in the classroom, and those who see past the 'student' to the unique person who resides inside."
- **A - Ask and Analyze** Creative genius is developed through hard work, focused attention, and relentless engagement. Ask yourself the hard questions about your lessons, your teaching strategies, your passion—"How can I..." "What can I do to ..." and then analyze the answers your inner self gives you. Make it happen. "Failure is only feedback in disguise". (This section sets the stage for Part II of his book - Crafting Engaging Lessons with presentational hooks)

- **T - Transformation** Ask yourself two questions: 1) If your students didn't have to be there, would you be teaching in an empty room? 2) Do you have any lessons you could sell tickets for? Well, would they??? And do you??? Transform your classroom into something irresistible for your students.
- **E - Enthusiasm** Burgess states, "If you . . . consistently ramp up your enthusiasm level in the classroom, you will be far ahead of the game and a dramatically better teacher." Teachers may resist the notion that they must perform and capture their audience's attention, but Burgess argues that the power of passion cannot be denied. "Infect your lessons [and yourself] and everything you do with enthusiasm and then watch it spread!"

Part II - Crafting Engaging Lessons

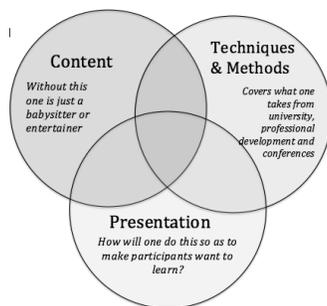


Figure 1: "Teaching is like triple Venn diagram" David Burgess

This section of TLAP focuses on the how of creating engaging lessons. This is the section that poses the questions for how to turn a ho-hum lesson into a hey-wow lesson! The point of this section is to help teachers build presentations in such a way that students will actually WANT to come to school and realize that education can be fun, entertaining, amazing, and life-changing.

Just a few of the MANY hooks that Dave Burgess poses..

- 🔗 How can I incorporate movement into this lesson and guarantee that every student is up and out of their desk at least once during this lesson?
- 🔗 How can I get my class outside my four walls for this lesson?
- 🔗 How can I incorporate art (music, drama, dance) into this lesson?
- 🔗 How can I design my lesson so that students are trying to unravel and solve a mystery?
- 🔗 How can I include a contest into this lesson to build excitement and motivation?

Part III - Building a Better Pirate Shiver me timbers! I cannot possibly share all the gems in this final section of TLAP. From suggestions to conquering the things that hold us back from starting the PIRATE journey, to not letting critics steal our soul, to securing a crew, to finding The Treasure, this section poses biggest question of all: Do you want to be great? Burgess answers for us—"Absolutely! Our purpose is too mighty for anything less"