

Visual Thinking Routines: A Mixed Methods Approach Applied to Student Teachers at the American University in Dubai

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Abstract : Visual thinking routines are principles based on several theories, approaches, and strategies. Such routines promote thinking skills, call for collaboration and sharing of ideas, and above all, make thinking and learning visible. Visual thinking routines were implemented in the teaching methodology graduate course at the American University in Dubai. The study used mixed methods. It was guided by the following two research questions: 1). To what extent do visual thinking inspire learning in the classroom, and make time for students' questions, contributions, and thinking? 2). How do visual thinking routines inspire learning in the classroom and make time for students' questions, contributions, and thinking? Eight student teachers enrolled in the teaching methodology course at the American University in Dubai (Spring 2017) participated in the following study. First, they completed a survey that measured to what degree they believed visual thinking routines inspired learning in the classroom and made time for students' questions, contributions, and thinking. In order to build on the results from the quantitative phase, the student teachers were next involved in a qualitative data collection phase, where they had to answer the question: How do visual thinking routines inspire learning in the classroom and make time for students' questions, contributions, and thinking? Results revealed that the implementation of visual thinking routines in the classroom strongly inspire learning in the classroom and make time for students' questions, contributions, and thinking. In addition, student teachers explained how visual thinking routines allow for organization, variety, thinking, and documentation. As with all original, new, and unique resources, visual thinking routines are not free of challenges. To make the most of this useful and valued resource, educators, need to comprehend, model and spread an awareness of the effective ways of using such routines in the classroom. It is crucial that such routines become part of the curriculum to allow for and document students' questions, contributions, and thinking.

Keywords : classroom display, student engagement, thinking classroom, visual thinking routines

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