Lesson 11

What You Miss Today, Makes it Harder to Learn Tomorrow

Goal: To demonstrate to students how missing classes seriously interferes with learning, often causing course work to seem much more difficult that it may actually be.

Materials: Marker board, markers, one copy for each student of 'Rate How Well You Can Learn When You Miss Class', pens, a substantial amount of building blocks, 'Tinker Toys', checkers, 'Legos' or 'Duplos' so that each student can have at least ten to twenty-five pieces; each student must have a similar assortment of pieces.

1. ▲ Ask the class members to participate in an experiment on learning. Inform the class that the experiment will have 3 trials and the students will rate how well they can learn during each of the trials. Distribute the 'Rate How Well You Learn When You Miss Class' forms to the students and begin the experiment as follows:

Trial 1 - Distribute the pieces to the class members then instruct them to copy a model that you build out of the pieces. After the instruction has been completed, compare the instructor's model with that of the students then ask the class members to fill in the first section of the form.

Trial 2 - Begin to offer instruction on making another model out of the pieces, but partway through the instruction, direct the students to leave the room. They must miss enough instruction that it will make it very difficult or impossible for them to complete the model. You should hide several pieces inside the model or behind it during the time that the students are out of the room. Absent students will not know about these pieces. After the instruction has been completed, compare the instructor's model to those of the students, then ask class members to fill in the second section of the form.

Trial 3 - Direct all of the students to leave the room and have them absent while you provide instruction on building another model. The model should consist of two sections with one of the sections remaining out of the students' view. The model can also contain pieces inside or behind it that absent class members will not be able to know about because they were out of the room during instruction. The students should miss enough instruction that it will be very difficult or impossible to complete the model. After this instruction has concluded, compare the students' models with that of the instructor, then ask the students to complete the remainder of the form, then discuss the experiment results and form with the class. Assist the students to recognize that they learn most effectively when they are present for all of the instruction.

2. ▲ Ask the students to identify the classes that they find the most difficult, then discuss how missing instruction may make a class seem more difficult than it would otherwise be. Ask the class to identify how missing instruction could make it much more difficult to succeed in the classes missed.

3. ▲ Ask the class members to identify activities they hope to do during their lives and elicit answers such as "get a driver's license" and "become a doctor". List the responses in a column on the board then assist the class to determine the likely results of missing instruction when preparing for these activities. Relate the class's observations to students' missing instruction time at school.

4. ▲ Review the major points of this lesson:
   • Most people learn best and can most easily master information when they are present for all of the instruction that is offered.
   • Most people have problems learning and mastering information when they miss some of the instruction that is offered.
   • Most people have great difficulty learning and mastering information when they miss all of the instruction that is offered.
   • Many classes that seem to be very difficult may actually be relatively simple to master if you receive all of the instruction offered.
   • Learning can be easy when you're there to learn.
Rate How Well You Can Learn When You Miss Class

When You Are Present for All of the Instruction
- I learn very well
- I learn okay
- I have some trouble learning
- I am unable to learn what is being taught

When You Miss Some of the Instruction
- I learn very well
- I learn okay
- I have some trouble learning
- I am unable to learn what is being taught

When You Miss All of the Instruction
- I learn very well
- I learn okay
- I have some trouble learning
- I am unable to learn what is being taught

I LEARN BEST AND CAN MOST EASILY COMPLETE TASKS WHEN:
- I am present for all the instruction
- I miss some of the instruction
- I miss all of the instruction