CAUTION: Alice in the Classroom Will Cause Motivation!

Motivation is a powerful key that will unlock a student’s desire to learn. Instructors hold that motivational key through the use of Alice in the classroom. The motivational classroom is not limited to a specific age, ability, subject area, or even the quantity of computers available. CAUTION: Alice will cause student excitement, boost self-esteem, encourage cooperative learning and motivate students to get *excited* about the subjects and lessons taught.

Alice can encourage students through improved grades. Grades reflect what a student has learned or knows about a subject or discipline and are used to chart progress and readiness for new challenges. Good grades predict future success in college and in career choices. In order to motivate all students to achieve good grades, teachers must develop techniques and offer activities that challenge students at every ability level to strive to improve, to learn new concepts, and to develop new skills. The use of Alice worlds can promote individual student learning within a special needs classroom as well as enhance curriculum through animation of plot in an English course or illustrate a complex concept in an advanced math or science class. Alice worlds meet the needs of auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learners. Improved understanding will lead to improved grades and greater confidence for students.

Alice worlds engage all students at all levels. Either teacher generated or student created worlds can serve as powerful mnemonic devices to enhance comprehension and aid mastery of lessons while providing stimulation for the reluctant learner. Primary teachers can use Alice to introduce letters of the alphabet or to animate word walls while a high school foreign language
teacher can utilize the record function of Alice to encourage pronunciation and dialog practice. More advanced students can create Alice worlds to promote learning for their classmates or to provide practice and individualized instruction for a student in a lower grade or course level. Technology has the potential to motivate a student as it relates to the expectancy-value model of motivation that focuses on three areas of motivational theory (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996): value: students’ beliefs about the importance or value of a task, expectancy: students’ beliefs about their ability or skill to perform the task, and affective: emotional reactions to the task and self-worth evaluation. The enthusiasm of the classroom instructor using Alice to teach a lesson, can help the student to remember the idea or concept of the lesson.

Alice worlds invite interaction from the students and encourage ownership of lesson ideas and concepts. While many classrooms are teacher-centered, the Alice classroom stimulates questions and invites exploration by students. Teachers with limited access to technology can create Alice worlds to capture students’ attention and welcome interaction with the lesson presentation. Students can ask questions or offer suggestions for changes and improvements of the Alice world. Teachers who have access to a computer lab can allow students to develop their own Alice worlds to illustrate the concepts presented or to demonstrate mastery of the lesson. This environment encourages students to explore either individually or collaboratively and creates a student-directed inquiry-based classroom that engages all students.

Students engaged in the learning process are motivated to acquire new skills. Since Alice worlds can easily be used by all ability levels, all students can be successful. An Alice novice will enjoy the basic movements of characters and can easily learn how to have two characters speak to create a simple dialogue to teach a learning concept for the classroom. Students will soon be exploring the many possibilities of Alice and proudly sharing their
creations with their teachers and classmates. An enthusiastic instructor holds the key to motivating students through Alice. At times, the excitement within the computer lab and/or classroom will be contagious. Instructors helping students learn----students helping students learn---and yes, students helping instructors learn. The line of communication and learning between instructor and students will be an open and positive experience for all! The result, a motivated classroom of learners----of all ages and learning abilities!
Works Cited