

Teaching Strategies

Teaching Strategies: The Big Picture

- State Content Standards
- Course Content
- Class Objectives
- **Teaching Strategies**
 - Relevant Techniques

Teaching Strategies

There are a variety of teaching strategies that teachers can use to improve student learning.

Effective teachers are always in search for new and exciting teaching strategies that will keep their students motivated and engaged.

Teaching Strategy Level 1

Direct Instruction

The very basic teaching strategy is the direct one-way lecture and demonstration approach.

The advantages of the direct instruction or lecture approach is that it provides a way to communicate a large amount of information to many listeners and maximizes instructor control.

Used in conjunction with Active Learning teaching strategies, the traditional direct lecturing can be an effective way to achieve instructional goals.

Teaching Strategy Level 2

Active Learning

Active Learning is any learning activity that students do in a classroom other than passively listening to an instructor's lecture.

In active learning students read and write, discuss, and reflect as they approach lesson content.

Research shows that active learning improves students' understanding and retention of information and can be very effective in developing higher order cognitive skills such as problem solving and critical thinking.

Examples of Active Learning:

- **Reading and Writing:** Assigning students reading and writing class projects can provide the students the opportunity to apply critical thinking skills as well as help them to learn course content.
- **Discussion:** Engaging students in discussion deepens their learning and motivation by propelling them to develop their own views and hear their own voices. A good environment for interaction is the first step in encouraging students to listen and talk.

Teaching Strategy Level 3

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative or cooperative learning are instructional approaches in which students work together in small groups to accomplish a common learning goal. This approach gives students the opportunity to work with others and see different points of view. Students learn more effectively when working together rather than apart, and it is also known to improve self-confidence in students. Examples of collaborative learning are:

- Games, experiments and simulations can be rich learning environments for students. Students today are grown up playing games and using interactive tools such as the Internet, phones, and other appliances.
- Team-based learning is a teaching approach in which students rely on each other for their own learning and are held accountable for coming to class prepared. Students are more responsible and more engaged when team-based learning is implemented.

Teaching Strategy Level 4

Differentiated Instruction

- Differentiated instruction is a framework for effective teaching that involves providing different students, in the same classroom, with different avenues to learning.
- Every person has a different mind, and therefore each person learns and understands information differently.
- Differentiated instruction strategies allow teachers to engage each student by accommodating to their specific learning style.
- By presenting material in a variety of different ways, we can appeal to students who understand and learn in different ways.
- When students are given more options on how they can learn material, they take on more responsibility for their own learning. Also, students appear to be more engaged in learning, and there are reportedly fewer discipline problems in classrooms where teachers provide differentiated lessons.
- Teachers can differentiate through several ways:
 - Content Manipulation
 - Learning Environment
 - Learning Modalities: Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile
 - Integrating Technology

Differentiated Instruction

Content Manipulation

Fundamental lesson content should cover the standards of learning set by the state educational standards. Some students in a class may be completely unfamiliar with the concepts in a lesson, some students may have partial mastery, and some students may already be familiar with the content before the lesson begins.

The teacher may differentiate the content by designing activities for groups of students that cover various levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (a classification of levels of intellectual behavior going from lower-order thinking skills to higher-order thinking skills). The six levels are: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating.

Students who are unfamiliar with a lesson may be required to complete tasks on the lower levels: remembering and understanding. Students with some mastery may be asked to apply and analyze the content, and students who have high levels of mastery may be asked to complete tasks in the areas of evaluating and creating.

Differentiated Instruction

Learning Environment

The conditions for optimal learning include both physical and psychological elements. A flexible classroom layout is key, incorporating various types of furniture and arrangements to support both individual and group work. Psychologically speaking, teachers should use classroom management techniques that support a safe and supportive learning environment.

Flexible grouping creates temporary student groups, that allow for the students to work together in a variety of ways and configurations depending upon activity and learning outcomes

Examples of differentiating through the classroom environment:

- Divide the students into reading groups to discuss the assignment,
- Allow students to read individually if preferred.

Differentiated Instruction

Learning Modalities

- Each student has a preferred learning style, and successful differentiation includes delivering the material to each style independently.
- Thus, we can differentiate instruction by appealing to different modalities - essentially, appealing to different senses.
- The four major modalities that educators focus on are:
 - Visual,
 - Auditory,
 - Kinesthetic, and
 - Tactile.

Differentiated Instruction

Learning Modalities: **Visual Modality**

The visual modality refers to sight. Many students are visual learners. Some characteristics of visual learners include:

- Increased attention to detail
- Good spelling; neat handwriting
- Need for visual demonstrations
- Recognize words by sight
- Are easily distracted by action or movement
- Remember faces, but forget names.

Some ways that we can differentiate instruction in order to appeal to visual learners include:

- Providing text with visual representations and illustrations
- Using graphic organizers such as charts, lists, webs, etc.
- Delivering direct instruction and demonstrations through smart-boards
- Using visual media (films, videos, etc.)
- Giving written directions for tasks and assignments.

Differentiated Instruction

Learning Modalities: **Auditory Modality**

- The auditory modality refers to hearing. Characteristics of auditory learners include:
 - Enjoy being read to
 - Able to verbally explain ideas
 - Like music
 - Enjoy discussions
 - Remember names but forget faces
 - Are easily distracted by noise
 - Do well in speeches and plays
- Some ways that we can differentiate instruction in order to appeal to auditory learners include:
 - Providing verbal instructions for tasks and assignments.
 - Lecturing
 - Assigning oral presentations
 - Regulating vocal tone and inflection
 - Providing audio books
 - Encouraging students to talk out solutions and verbally express their reasoning
 - Providing a quiet learning environment
 - Presenting content through music.

Differentiated Instruction

Learning Modalities: **Kinesthetic Modality**

- The kinesthetic modality refers to doing, moving, and acting. Some characteristics of kinesthetic learners include:
 - Energetic and enjoy moving
 - Prefer hands-on activities
 - Think and learn best when they are active
 - Have difficulty retaining material presented through lectures
 - Have difficulty sitting and reading for long periods of time
 - Most students are kinesthetic learners at a young age, but are required to become verbal or auditory learners later on due to the nature and structure of traditional school settings.
- Some ways that we can differentiate instruction in order to appeal to kinesthetic learners include:
 - Providing opportunities for students *to do* rather than just watch or listen (hands-on activities, field trips, experiments, etc.)
 - Encouraging the use of manipulatives (counters, blocks, chips, etc.)
 - Incorporating activities into lessons that require movement (games, dancing)
 - Assigning “class jobs” to students. This also teaches responsibility and increases students’ self-confidence

Differentiated Instruction

Learning Modalities: **Tactile Modality**

- The tactile modality refers to the sense of touch. Some characteristics of tactile learners include:
 - Prefer the use of manipulatives (counters, blocks, chips, etc.)
 - Retain information better when writing, drawing, or tracing
 - Enjoy doodling, and are often artistic in nature
 - Benefit from tangible representations of new material
- Some ways that we can differentiate instruction in order to appeal to tactile learners include:
 - Providing manipulatives and tangible representations of material.
 - Encouraging students to take notes during lectures
 - Providing opportunities to create artistic representations of learning (drawing, painting, etc.)
 - A spelling technique that helps students who are tactile learners, involves having students trace letters and words with their fingers.

Differentiated Instruction

Integrating Technology

Integrating technology into the classroom is a great way to empower students to stay connected with the instruction process. Technology-rich lessons have been found to keep students motivated and engaged longer.

Some examples of utilizing technology in the classroom are:

- Use of smart-boards to utilize on-line resources: demos, animation, graphic tables, lesson plans, internet-based lessons,
- Use of document-cameras to project text, photos, 3-D objects,
- Use of kindles and iPads,
- Creating a class website, taking your class on a virtual field trip,
- Use of overhead projectors