



Learning Strategies

What should we notice when we first enter the classroom?

[we don't have to see everything the first time – during many visits to the classroom, we would see examples of these items]

Activity centers for all content areas

“Expectations (a more positive term than “Rules”) and Consequences” clearly stated and posted for all to see

Behavior Log with pencil attached – students self-monitor behavior

Print rich environment (not “décor” – everything should be content based)

Word Walls:

High Frequency Words - suggest that alphabet letters are posted and each day one or more students draw words from a bucket or box and THROUGHOUT THE DAY, lead class in “Getting to Know This Word”

1st: (early morning) - say word

Later – spell word

Later – define word

Later – Write word in a sentence

Prefixes and Suffixes

Latin and Green Root Words

Content – for subjects covered in class – words alone or with definitions

Posters: very little “store bought” – much better to have students make posters from what they are learning; math and science teachers should have pictures of “tools” pasted onto a poster board (thermometer, rulers, triple beam balances, hand lens, etc.)

Student work (current, within past 2 weeks) exhibited (not completed worksheets of Lower Order Thinking) – best student work should be Graphic Organizers or Thinking Maps along with writing and project samples – posting current student work by ALL students helps them develop self-esteem and validates their learning

Evidence of content area development and mastery (examples):

Science experiment on window ledge with “Scientific Process” sign adjacent;

Reading “Go Map” where students place post-its with predictions and questions

Classroom Library, especially with Leveled Readers

Objective (TEKS) for today’s lesson should be posted before the lesson begins; as lesson begins a student reads the objective (students are NOT expected to understand it before the lesson – they are learning goal setting); at closure, another student reads and Teacher determines and (at least) mentally records which students “get it” and which will need additional work

A daily Schedule or Agenda with times stated – this helps students learn to plan and is best done with a large poster on which graphics for content areas are attached (Velcro is good)

Evidence that technology is a part of every day instruction (overhead projector, computer, SmartBoard, LeapFrogs, Listening Centers with Headphones, InFocus type projectors, TV with DVD or VCR

Administrative and Safety items

Line Order List

Fire Drill, Emergency, and Tornado drill exit plans

Hall passes so that students know where to pick them up and replace them

What do we immediately notice about the activity level in the classroom?

Active participation of teachers and students (teacher is NOT seated at desk while students do worksheets – teacher is up and around)
 Students are engaged in learning
 Noise level is controlled

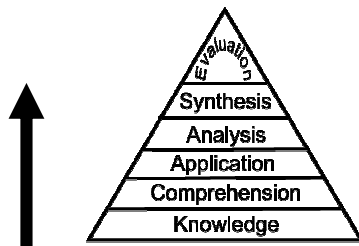
Differentiated Instruction

The class should always be somewhere within this framework or Instructional Path

	Teacher	Student
Whole Group Instruction Teacher opens with comprehension question Teacher answers question while modeling his/her thought process by discussing/explaining what he/she is doing during the modeling – students are taking notes	100%	0%
Guided Practice (also known as Scaffolding) Teacher asks comprehension question and students answer, using think aloud strategy; this includes Monitoring and Adjusting <i>Small group instruction fits here as teachers take a few students aside for additional instruction and reinforcement</i>	50%	50%
Independent Practice [during this time, Teacher walks around the room and constantly checks for understanding] Students at Centers or using Technology (see example box), Listening Activities Partner Reading, Projects Think*Pair*Share, Visualization Activities (art, hands-on (this includes more creativity on the student's part than simply using manipulatives), Writing Activities	0%	100%
Whole Group Closure, summarizing, and review Student asks Comprehension question and students answer.	Either 0% and 100% or 25%	75%

Questions and Responses (Q&R)

What does this look like? We use Bloom's Taxonomy to Guide our questioning so that we help students develop their Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)



Student to Student Interaction

Cooperative Learning – teams usually have

Leader – who directs THIS activity (roles need to change so all students learn them)

Recorder – note taker

Retriever – gets supplies

Timer – keeps everyone on task and on schedule

Peer Instruction – students teach each other and learn to praise each other by having seen the teacher praising students.

DEAR and DEW

This can be a fun activity, especially if a bell is used. Teacher strikes the bell and it is time to

Drop Everything And Read

or

Drop Everything and Write

This can include timed reading, for example 15” and set the timer.

More About Reading

Every Day practice one vowel or consonant sound, can be combined with a pattern

CVC (Consonant Vowel Consonant, as in word “bad”

Oral Reading (teacher models a sentence with correct pronunciation and

ENUNCIATION, then students read aloud)

Rhyme – poetry is very important in developing phonemic awareness

Music, Mnemonic Devices, and Dances

One of the best tools for teaching is music and songs. Students can help write new lyrics to familiar tunes. Request Ms. Gabor’s Science Songbook (also includes the dance “The Continental Drift”).

The teacher doesn’t have to play an instrument – a cappella is fine for students.

Nemonic Devices help students remember hard concepts. Example from Ms. Gabor’s Science classes: Pete Likes Biting Anthony (peat moss, lignite, bitumen, anthracite – the 4 stages of Coal)

Visuals that Excite Students – they work at

Classroom Whiteboard on wall (preferable to chalk board with all that dust)

Easel pads

Individual whiteboards with dry erase markers and erasers (great for doing quick multiplication facts)

Portfolios
Praising students

Profiling Students
Print Rich Environments
QAR – Question and Response
Questioning strategies
 Call outs (using cards or sticks)
 Choral
 Pair-Share
 Volunteer vs. non-volunteers
Quite Time/Rest time
Reciprocal teaching
Refocus students' attention
Round Robin Reading
Rubrics (not used much in many classes)
SDAIE (Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English)
SSR (Sustained Silent Reading)
Setting High Expectations
Shadowing
Small Group Instruction
Student demonstrations in class
Student projects

Student worksheets that require thinking

students using planners and outlines
timed reading
transition

Use of Technology

Audiotapes
Computer with Inspiration or Kidspiration software (students create graphic organizers/thinking maps) – Intel Thinking Tools is excellent
iPods – Teacher can record lesson as giving it and students who are absent can later listen
Projectors – overhead and InFocus type
TV with VCR or DVD
Website for students
Whole group instruction using InFocus with software such as Vita from Dallas ISD Math Dept.

Sound in the Classroom

Research shows that at 12 feet from the Teacher, students can hear less than 50% of what is said. It is important that sound systems be used so that every child can hear instruction. Also, most students love to read using a microphone. Some may be shy or afraid at first, but they can practice a passage or poem for their reading.

Using Graphic Organizers or Thinking Maps

Graphic Organizers are preferably created by students and not purchased or worksheet format. However, the latter may be used when students are first introduced to them.

KWL = Know-Want to Know-Learned

Order or Sequencing (which information is missing in the empty box)

Summary Box

Timelines

Venn Diagrams (Compare and Contrast)

Web Mapping

Character Maps

What is an algorithm?

Just a fancy word for a multi-step math problem. We start off teaching math operations, for example: if 2 girls each have 2 books, how many books do they have? (Answer: $2 \times 2 = 4$). However, if the problem has more than one step to it, we call it an algorithm. Example of an algorithm: If 2 girls each have 2 books and the books cost \$3 each, how much did they spend on books? (Answer $2 \times 2 = 4$ and $4 \times \$3 = \12)

Mentoring

Mentoring is an actual technique in which we are trained. Mentors don't answer questions. They ask probing questions of the mentee regarding the mentee's thoughts, feelings, ideas, experiences, so that the mentee discovers the answer for himself or herself. People being mentored need to know this is the process so they don't become frustrated when answers aren't forthcoming.

What do we look for on the Teacher's desk?

Gradebook up to date (if Teacher uses electronic gradebook on computer, there still should be a binder marked "Gradebook" with a note inside that explains how to access program in computer)

Lesson Plan – current, with list of resources (books and materials) to be used

Student Profile Binder (remember all information on SpEd students is confidential)

Substitute Teacher Binder clearly marked (schedules, instructions, seating chart)

Seating Chart

Instruction sheet for Technology or Equipment, if necessary

Posted Inside Door

Master Schedule

Specials Schedule

Line order list