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Differentiated Instruction

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October 29, 2009

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Educators usually have to find ways to teaching adult learners in order to deliver the necessary content to be learned. Students learn at different levels and comprehension of lessons to be learned may be easy for some students while others may still have a difficult time in grasping key information. Once students have a good understanding on the subject matter, they can easily approach homework assignments with ease. In a previous course, students were having such a difficult with statistics. The chapter readings for each week did not give good detailed examples in handling content surrounding chi-square to t-test to standard deviation to constructing a graph. The instructor began providing students with “read me first” notes to provide a simplified version of what certain statistical information mean. In addition, to the note readings, the instructor would give real life examples to help students to get a better understanding surrounding what the content was actually about. Most of the class still struggled with the statistical class because of the instructor’s inability to change or alter the assignment for better clarification (Heritage, 2007).

When teaching the content of statistics it is best to model for the students the different ways that key concepts can be learned. When students learn how the teacher approaches each problem, they will be able to visually make the connection based on what they see and hear. Plus, repetitively doing statistical math problems will help students to retain what they have learned. The next recommended approach to changing the content is by incorporating a treasure hunt activity which would allow students to dig for the information and list page numbers to definitions to short summaries and much more. Such activities help students to become active learners in seeking out information and learning all at the same time. In an action research class, the students had to use the treasure hunt activity in order to fully understand how action research

works and what the elements consist of. Through the treasure hunt activity, students began to develop an understanding based on the direct search.

The traditional means to teaching such as lecturing to students has to be taken to another level. Every educator's goal is to get students engaged in the learning process, but it requires more resourceful unique strategies in helping students to get a better understanding of what is being taught. Instructional strategies can either make or break a classroom depending on how it is used. Some instructional strategies have to be altered in order for students to receive the necessary content. For instance, I would use the drill and practice mode in guiding my students into the content (Lang & Evans, 2006). A minimum use of lecturing and a maximized use of interactive means really help students to engage in the content more effectively than just talking all the time (Anderson, 2001-2002). A few classes ago, the instructor placed us in groups in which we had to debate a side regarding sequence numbering of courses. The team's position was sequence numbering can be a handicap for students who transfer to an institution that may not accept all or most credits. My personal experience was a productive argument for the other team that was for sequence numbering. In my argument, I stated how I transferred from a junior college to a four year institution in hopes of being in school for less than 4 years. Later, the institution only accepted a few classes which cause me to be at a freshman level instead of a junior status.

Having a debate was one of the interactive ways in which it helped the class to understand the method behind sequence numbers both positive and negative aspects that the class retrieved from research, personal experiences and from working in the field. Sometimes, altering interactive instructional strategies are ways to enable students to fully understand content information. These strategies can be use for any subject content being addressed. Seemingly,

students can utilize personal and professional experiences into the content in which the instructor has laid out a format that encourages student-led discussions and being able to apply critical thinking skills in linking content to real world experiences.

After applying effective interactive instructional strategies, students will be able to reach a point of mastery through the understanding of the required content. Before reaching the mastery level, students will need to go through certain steps in order to reach that particular level. During my summer experience, I would constantly have students to take notes of any information that I write on the board. While teaching math, I would do an example through modeling how to approach the problem and then would create a new problem for the students to work out for about five minutes. After the time was up, students would check their sample problem from the way I work it out on the board. In addition, I would give students similar homework problems to do at home. Often, I would tell my students that simple phrase “practice makes perfect”. Traditionally, students would have a comprehensive test regarding everything they have covered up to this point. Instead, I created a mock take home test in which students would have to demonstrate their complete understanding of the content weekly. The next thing I used for students to show their mastery of the content was by having them to demonstrate through role playing on the whiteboard their understanding of various math lessons that has been discussed from week to week.

While mastering content information, educators may have to change or alter the environment in order to appeal to the learning style and diverse group of learners. In a marketing class during the MBA program with University of Phoenix on ground, the instructor would have us to take a trip across the street downtown Chicago in Walgreens. In order to understand advertising and marketing, the instructor showed us how products that are displayed top, front

and center how they can grab a customers' attention. Then, the less attentive products were on the bottom shelf or in corners which are not easily detected at eye level. This short trip enabled the class to see the importance of advertising and marketing in a store such as Walgreens and other retail store chains. Prior to the class exercises, each of the students were assigned a place of business to visit and to observe the flow of traffic in and out and the products that seem to be sold the most. My place of business for observation was Dunkin Donuts. I came in and order my usual coffee and donut. As I sat down, I began sitting in an area in which the services and customers were all in plain view. During the observation, I was able to document products that were mostly sold to the number of customers by gender, profession, and age range. After the observations made, students would discuss their findings and how it relates to the content of marketing.

Overall, the use of the following recommendations:

- Modeling
- Repetition
- Treasure Hunt
- Practice-n-Drill
- Group Debates
- Note Taking
- Role Playing
- Field Trips
- Observations

Play a significant role in engaging adult learners into learning the content as well as playing an active role in the learning process is a good start in having a productive classroom discussion.

The days of just lecturing to students can no longer be the only means to learning subject matter content. Students bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise, personal backgrounds into the learning environment. Plus, the diverse group of learners also has different learning styles in which instructors have to creatively find ways to meeting those needs. All of the recommendations play a role in appealing to the learning styles of each student and allows the student to play a role

either by hands on, through experience, or through a visual. The best part of it all students will get to see and comprehend content best through an applied real world approach (Rotenberg, 2005).

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