

READING 4.5 - A Variety of Teaching Methods

Action Projects

- Description:** Students take leadership on a specific project for the school or the broader community.
- Uses:** Good final project
Can lead to public recognition
- Advantages:** Allows students a chance to put into practice what they have learned
Enhances critical thinking
- To Consider:** Can be time consuming or controversial



Audio-Visuals (Transparencies, Models, Music)

- Description:** Utilizing a variety of tools to aid in teaching such as videos, television, slides, audiotapes.
- Uses:** To illustrate concepts which are difficult to comprehend by describing them
- Advantages:** Gets students involved with media they may already know
Can create an environment
Keeps attention
Aids visual learners (picture people)
- To Consider:** Less interaction
Time factor

Community Studies/Case Studies/Issue Analysis

Description: Students study real life situations that they can learn from

Uses: To understand actual problems encountered in the world

Advantages: Students learn research, inference and application skills

Enhances critical thinking

To Consider: Can be time consuming

Students may miss the point of the study if not similar enough to what they are studying

Debate/Dialectic

Description: Teacher assigns roles and a specific problem

Students learn from interacting and understanding different points of view

Uses: Learning to understand and respect different points of view

Learning to synthesize opposing positions

Advantages: Students are totally involved

Research is needed for the debate to be successful

Enhances critical thinking

Encourages verbal skills

Serves as a laboratory for many lessons involving group communication.

Demonstration

- Description:** Stand before class, show something and describe
- Uses:** Difficult concepts that are hard to visualize
- Advantages:** Works well if the demo is too difficult for the students to do
Provides a visual; Can be very dramatic and have a substantial impact
- To Consider:** It may not work (for example a chemistry experiment)
Visual only
Length of time: Students may get restless
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Discovery Demonstration

- Description:** Teacher conducts silently and the students describe
Students get to watch but are encouraged to make verbal observations
- Uses:** Follow up to a regular demonstration
Students get a chance to share what they know or as the main demonstration
- Advantages:** Work well if demonstration is too difficult for the students
Can have a lot of impact
Good for problem solving, critical thinking
- To Consider:** What if it doesn't work? Have alternative method ready to roll
Only some students will make verbal comments
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Discussion

Description: Open Forum with two way communication. The teacher acts as chairperson, guide, initiator, summarizer, and referee.

Uses: Help students to make inferences, draw conclusions, and communicate

Advantages: Develops a sense of group
Provides a means for clarification
Retains interest
Draws ideas from students and makes them think

To Consider: Verbal Only
Students must have prior information
Some students may dominate
Time consuming
Threatening for some to speak out

Experience

Description: Non-directive learning. Students learn from their success and failures through direct real-life experience.

Beyond planning the activity, there is an absence of teacher involvement.

Questionable as to whether this really constitutes a method.

Advantages: No teacher is required
Students can learn from mistakes
Great transfer of learning

To Consider: Safety could be a problem
Students may learn the wrong behavior
No interaction with teacher

Exposition

Description: Lecture, conveying information via one way communication, very little dialog if any.

Uses: Introductions, Directions, Short Explanations
Conclusions

Advantages: Much information in a short period of time
Helps students learn to listen
Easy for the professor

To Consider: Verbal only
Limited attention spans
Passive Learning
Student logic not equal to teacher logic
What is said may not be equal to what is heard

Exposition with Interaction

Description: Lecture/Discussion with questions encouraged

Uses: Review
Introducing New Information

Advantages: Can get much information across
Students learn to listen
Students can get clarification.

To Consider: Verbal only, Passive
Questions may be limited to a few students

Facilitation

Description: Teacher acts as facilitator for a particular experience by setting it up, allowing it to happen, and processing it afterwards through a series of sequenced questions.

Uses: To maximize the learning potential of an experience

Advantages: Learning comes from the experience, making it more tangible
Better retention

To Consider: Teacher must be able to sequence the questions
Teacher must be skilled at reading groups

Games

Description: To teach facts, ideas, or concepts through a game

Uses: To illustrate concepts by group interaction or to break up the routine of a class.

Advantages: Fun; Burns off excess energy; Involves whole person

To Consider: Some may feel silly playing the game

Guest Speaker

Description: Having someone with expert information present information to the students

Uses: When the topic centers on specific areas of expertise (space exploration, medicine, etc.)

Advantages: Renews the interest of students
Students may be eager to hear "expert"
Breaks up routine

To Consider: Speaker may be boring
Speaker not aware of audience/or needs of students
May not cover what you would like for him to.

Guided Discovery or Exploratory Learning

Description: Students are directing the learning with only slight directions from the teacher

Uses: When you can have direct contact with the materials

Advantages: Students are totally involved in the material
Students manipulate and make new discoveries

To Consider: Must have discovery questions prepared
Must have enough equipment for everyone
Sometimes noisy and chaotic
Different end times

Moral Dilemmas

Description: Teacher presents difficult questions/dilemmas for students to consider

Uses: Used to develop personal views about issues.

Advantages: Enhances critical thinking and understanding of personal philosophy

To Consider: Some may not wish to share their personal philosophies publicly

Open Inquiry

Description: Teacher presents a starting problem, students work toward solution

Uses: To enhance critical thinking about a problem

Advantages: Students are totally involved
Content is focused by students
Good for problem solving and critical thinking

To Consider: Not easy to teach specific content
Noisy
Teacher must be willing to say "I don't know"
Different end times

Peer Teaching

Description: Teacher allows students to teach and share their knowledge

Uses: Used toward the end of a lesson or unit

Good preparation for the real world

Advantages: If you can successfully teach someone else, you have really learned the concept.

Allows students the chance to practice presentation skills

To Consider: Takes time for everyone to have an opportunity

Difficult when someone isn't prepared

Some students have difficulty speaking in front of their peers.

Projects: Individual/Group

Description: Teacher provides a problem or situation that the group must solve

Uses: To provide time for further depth

To foster group cooperation

Advantages: Students gain depth

Good example of what the real world is like

Enhances critical thinking

To Consider: Students learn a lot about only one topic

Group dynamics may overshadow group project.

Skits or Role Plays

Description: Acting out a story or scenarios in the hopes of conveying to the audience certain facts or ideas

Uses: To illustrate concepts or historical events

Advantages: Active: gets students involved

Humor

Helps students visualize

To Consider: Can flop

Must be entertaining

Time consuming

Socratic Method/Inquiry

Description: To facilitate learning by asking questions

Uses: To develop content, definitions, and concepts

Advantages: Works from what students already know

Makes a formal connection

Better retention rate

Encourages students to think

To Consider: Must know audience

Must sequence questions

Problem when students aren't prepared

Must have alternative plan ready

Summarization important

Story-telling

Description: Relating facts, concepts, or ideas through the use of story

Uses: As a lead in to a topic or to give an illustration/example

Advantages: Grabs interest

Can relate to a real life scenario

Stories hit home

To Consider: Time consuming

Need to be a good reader or storyteller

Can get bored

Teachable Moment

Description: Teacher utilizes an event caused, initiated, or discovered by the students to share insight and information.

Uses: Wide variety of settings in nature

Advantages: Real-life learning

Provides immediate insight

Students learn through experience

Students learn to observe and to be more attentive to surroundings

To Consider: Teacher must be alert and in control. Can draw conclusions for the student instead of letting them make their own. Teacher must be flexible and sensitive