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Professor Bedell

ED-361

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Mini DAR

Describe

The Learner and Learning Theme: *Candidates demonstrate their ability to thoughtfully examine, critically analyze, and insightfully reflect upon their readiness to use an understanding of learning theory, learner development, and learner differences for the design of effective learning experiences in a variety of settings with diverse learners.*

My Interpretation:

      I believe that this part of the Vermont Licensure Portfolio emphasizes the importance of future teachers using learning theory, learner development, and learner differences when designing their curriculum. Without taking all of these aspects into consideration, they are not promoting an equitable education; the learning will not be as accessible to some as it will be to others. Furthermore, this part of the theme recognizes that diversity goes beyond learning differences; there are divides regarding culture, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, gender, etc. As a future educator, I will need to be aware of these differences in my classroom, and design a curriculum using my knowledge of learning theory, learner development, and differences to ensure that all my students can succeed.

      Learner development and learning theory are equally as important as learner differences, too. Teachers must know where their students lie developmentally, because otherwise, they may be trying to teach them information that they are not ready for yet, or they may be teaching it in a way that is difficult for them to understand. This could happen if a student is functioning at a

lower grade level knowledge-wise. For example, one would not teach an English Language Learner a complex math problem in the same way they would teach a native speaker. Therefore, educators must have an extensive knowledge of learning theory to accommodate any possible differences they may encounter. Without multiple ways of teaching information, educators would not be able to reach all students.

Context:

For my education class, Curriculum in Middle and High School, we created two back to back mini lessons to teach to a group of peers. These lessons were twenty minutes each, and were specific to each of our content areas. My two mini lessons were small introductions to the following aspects of culture: food, fashion, and sports. These two mini lessons will combine to create a full forty five minute lesson for my final unit plan. It was important for me to include this as a lesson because in my unit, there is a performance assessment at the end where students will have to present information about culture in the Spanish speaking country they researched. Since culture is an umbrella term, these three specific aspects of culture will give them a focus for what to research. These aspects are also very important for them to know about, because these are key components of any culture, and if they are learning a new language, they need to know about the culture.

Analyze

PC 3.1: Active Engagement. Candidates design learning environments that support individual learning marked by active engagement.

This performance criterion describes a learning environment or classroom in which each student on their own is actively involved in their learning in a personalized way. Rather than

being passive learners in a lecture based classroom, students are participating and interacting with this new information. It is student centered learning, and is much more hands on. In the article, *How To Ensure Students Are Actively Engaged and Not Just Compliant*, John Almarode points out that active engagement "'is not a one dimensional concept'" (Almarode), nor is it about if a student is paying attention or not. Students who are generally quiet people can also be engaged. In his article, Almarode states that to have engagement, learning should be personalized and must be interactive. I focused on these two but they are just two of his eight criteria, the rest of the criteria are included in this article.

In my Back to Back Lessons, I tried my best to incorporate teaching strategies that would encourage active engagement for each student in their learning. One of my standards is Cultural Comparisons, which means that I need my students to do a lot of self reflecting on their home country. This means that any work they do around Cultural Comparisons makes this learning personalized, because each of their experiences is unique, and they have to make those personalized connections. Going by John Almarode's definition, this would qualify as active engagement. An example of this specific idea was in my exit ticket for the second mini lesson. The students participated in a WordSplash, where I put four terms up on the board, then ask them what words come to mind when they read them. My four terms were American Moda (fashion), Spanish Moda, Spanish Gastronomía (gastronomy), and American Gastronomía. Individually, each person told me what words came to mind when they read each term. This was engaging because they had to connect back to the lesson from that day, as well as make personal connections to their culture. They had opportunities to make their answers unique to them, based on their prior experiences.

Almarode poses the following questions regarding interaction to encourage active engagement: "Is there social interaction? Do students have an opportunity to talk about the learning and interact?". Originally, I was going to focus more on the performance criterion regarding positive social interaction, however, I realized after doing my lessons that my students chose to be more independent when doing their work, so focusing on individual active engagement was the better option. Luckily, both PC's required a level of interaction, so the change was not too hard. I planned a jigsaw activity where my students would read a set of articles based on either food or fashion, then presented the information they had learned to the class. The reading and presenting was supposed to happen in groups to promote social interaction, however, the students preferred working individually. Since this seemed to be the better option for them, I adjusted the plan. The students ended up doing the research and presenting on their own, but I think this gave them more motivation to become masters of their topic. They got to put their own spin on things, and interacted with the learning while presenting to the class. They were able to show evidence of their understanding by giving a [brief presentation](#) about what they read about, and the main points the reader should take away.

My first lesson, however, did a better job at integrating more social interaction. I made a presentation for my first lesson, and not wanting to lose interest and attention, I created a NearPod with interactive slides. Along with getting to share with one another and with the class about their quick write, the students got to anonymously contribute to class discussion with the interactive slides. This was engaging because it was a form of social interaction. Additionally, I think the anonymous aspect of the slides really helped, because students felt more comfortable putting something out there that had the possibility of being wrong. Instead of holding back, they

were all in, and getting actively engaged in their learning. Overall, I feel like I did well adapting to the circumstances, but the experience made me wonder: In what other ways can I incorporate social interaction in a research based class other than through NearPod presentations?

Reflection

Tying this experience back to the Theme of the Part, I feel as though I was successful in using my knowledge of learning theory and learner differences to design an effective learning experience for the second class. I kept my focus on learning theories that were more student centered and engaging, and followed what was best for students. As mentioned in the article, compliant students are not engaged students; instead of forcing them to do exactly what my lesson plan stated, I was flexible and allowed them to have a voice in the classroom. Choice allows for engagement, not compliance. After editing and adapting my second lesson plan around these ideas, I found my second mini lesson was more interesting and engaging for the students, and it really showed. From this experience, I recognized how important it is to create learning opportunities that get students up and moving, talking, or that give them more responsibility outside of being "the student". Although NearPod works, I found that it is not preferable for learning a second language. It reaffirmed my perceptions about lecture based learning; It works in small doses. However, long term, I really feel like students need more practice actually using the language and being immersed to learn best.

Going forward, specifically for my unit, I will have to make sure that my lessons incorporate more hands on, interactive learning. My unit will have primarily research based lessons, so I worry that research time in class will take away from interacting with the language. Additionally, my teaching will stray away from traditional lecturing, and I will try to find

different ways that I can get my information across. I will work to use more personal communication strategies in my classroom so students can get practice with the Spanish language. Additionally, I will follow teaching strategies associated only with student centered teaching philosophies, such as progressivism and social reconstruction theory. My classroom will not be lecture based, rather it will be engaging and exciting.

ED 361 Analysis and Reflection

From this process, I also learned how important student voice is in the classroom. I found the feedback sheets extremely helpful when adjusting my second lesson plan, because the students in my lesson had a lot to say about what worked and what did not. Although they were not ninth grade students, like the ones in my unit, I imagine that I could still learn a lot from students in that age group.

My exit slips measured students learning well, because the first asked for students to recall something they found interesting from the class, and a question they had afterwards. It was interesting to see what stood out to them, and the inclusion of a question made them dive a little deeper. My second exit slip was a word splash, and this aligned well with my objectives and [Cultural Comparisons standard](#), because the word splash showed differences between the culture in Spain and the culture in the United States. I changed my exit slip for the second lesson because I felt as though my first one showed learning, but did not align with my objectives. Along with this, I changed my second lesson plan to be more interactive and engaging, whereas I originally had it as a lecture based class. This change was based around my [Interpersonal Communication standard](#), because I felt as though my first lesson was not aligned to it as much as it could have been.

Instruction from both my literacy and curriculum classes helped immensely when making these lesson plans. I used resources and strategies, mostly from my literacy class, but my organizational and teaching strategies stemmed mostly from curriculum. I thought more about student need and ability from the curriculum.This made my lesson more inclusive and engaging for all.

	1	2	3
Description	The description employs insufficient details of the context and/or demonstrates misinterpretation of the Theme.	The description demonstrates the candidate's ability to recall the context and discuss the Theme.	**The description demonstrates the candidate's ability to depict the context in which the evidence was collected** and to illuminate the Theme.[BC1]

Comments:

Score: _____

Analysis of Performance Criterion 3.1: Candidates design learning environments that support individual learning marked by active engagement.	The analysis demonstrates misunderstanding of how to use individualized learning for diverse learners. The analysis reveals unexplored suppositions about the Performance Criterion, uses insubstantial or inappropriate literature, notes irrelevant evidence, and/or overstates or does not state the candidate's effectiveness, reiterating conventional notions.	The analysis demonstrates the candidate's ability to select and apply learning opportunities for individual learners. The analysis reiterates the Performance Criterion, references related literature, program mission or conceptual framework, identifies evidence, and **remarks on the candidate's effectiveness, providing basic description and commentary.**	**The analysis demonstrates the candidate's ability to design learning environments that support individual learning marked by active engagement.** **The analysis explicitly interprets the Performance Criterion, is grounded in appropriate literature, program mission or conceptual framework,** is enhanced by salient evidence[BC2] [BC3] , and critically evaluates the candidate's effectiveness, while generating ideas, questions, or proposals.
Comments: Score: _____			

Analysis of Performance Criterion 3.2: Candidates design learning environments that support collaborative learning marked by positive social interaction.	The analysis demonstrates misunderstanding of how to use collaborative learning for diverse learners.	The analysis demonstrates the candidate's ability to select and apply collaborative-learning opportunities.	The analysis demonstrates the candidate's ability to design learning environments that support collaborative learning marked by positive social interaction.
	The analysis reveals unexplored suppositions about the Performance Criterion, uses insubstantial or inappropriate literature, notes irrelevant evidence, and/or overstates or does not state the candidate's effectiveness, reiterating conventional notions.	The analysis reiterates the Performance Criterion, references related literature, program mission or conceptual framework, identifies evidence, and remarks on the candidate's effectiveness, providing basic description and commentary.	The analysis explicitly interprets the Performance Criterion, is grounded in appropriate literature, program mission or conceptual framework, is enhanced by salient evidence, and critically evaluates the candidate's effectiveness, while generating ideas, questions, or proposals.

Comments:

Score: _____

Self-Reflection	In relation to the Theme, the reflection demonstrates insufficient discussion of learning drawn from specific incidents and/or ideas for ongoing development.	In relation to the Theme, the reflection demonstrates the candidate's ability to recount incidents, recognize personal beliefs, and identify actions for additional learning.	**In relation to the Theme, the reflection demonstrates the candidate's ability to consider specific incidents, rethink long-standing personal perceptions, and conceptualize a vision for ongoing growth in this area.**

Comments:

Score:

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[BC1]Almost here!

[BC2]Would be great to include examples to get to this level

[BC3]