Jami Williams – Instructional Strategies for Middle School Learning

Strategy:	**Strengths:**	**Benefits for MS Students:**	**Teacher Behavior Requirements:**	**Appropriate Activity**
Cooperative Learning	Emphasizes cooperation rather than competition – Allows students to work in groups	Takes advantage of cooperation and social interaction	Teach students procedures – Use peer evaluation, assigned group roles – Monitor and observe groups	After reading the short story *Harrison Burgeron,* students will become agents of the United States Handicapper General. They will be given four "identity" groups: athlete, scholar, communicator, and artist, and divide themselves into groups according to self-recognized talents and abilities with the teacher's assistance. Students will evaluate the other three groups according to their unique talents. The emphasis will be on other students' talents, naming and evaluating them, and then providing a "mandated" handicap. For example, athletes must always wear a 10-lb. weight belt around their waist and weights on their hands and ankles when competing. They will present their handicaps in a press conference format where other students will serve as press members.
Debates	Presents a formal oral discussion on a researched topic	Uses verbal and thinking skills – Builds confidence in organizing thoughts and speaking	Assign topics or allow student choice on developmentally appropriate topics	Students will work individually to determine five areas of controversy from their "universe." Students will be divided into two groups; each group must prepare ten arguments for and ten arguments against the five areas of controversy. The debate will be run in a "Blitzkrieg" format where the topics will be randomly flashed on the screen, and the students will come to the front of the room and draw a card that tells them whether they will support or oppose the topic. Each group will be allowed two tap-outs during the debate.
Demonstrations	Use with any subject to grab attention, review a process, or	Provides opportunity to participate in active learning – Develops speaking skills –	Carefully preplan who will conduct the demonstration – Make any special arrangements for equipment – Focus on the instructional objectives	Each student will be asked to share with the class a specific talent or interest they have. They will then prepare a "how-to" presentation using a dissemination process and sequential presentation. Students will then be asked to demonstrate their

	provide a concrete example – Presents information effectively	Develops confidence working before a group		talent, step-by-step to the class, and then a classmate will be selected to come up to the demonstration area and repeat the process that the student demonstrated with the assistance of the original presenter.
Drill and Practice	Allows practice and reinforces tasks and concepts	Helps students gain confidence and demonstrate competence	Relate exercises to instructional objectives	Students will participate in an Example Bee. A list of literary devices will be cut apart and placed in a fishbowl. Students will then come to the front of the room, draw one, and describe the literary device without actually using the word. It is based on the Taboo game.
Exploratory activities	Permits exploration of a topic of interest within the curriculum – Is usually completed by an individual student	Moves students from concrete operational stage to formal operational stage – Allows independent work -- Encourages students to form opinions about what they like or do not like	Identify individual interests – Structure activities to guide students	Students will be asked to research their favorite style of music with the specific goal of writing the history of and pinpointing the "fathers and mothers" of their favorite style of music. They will then be asked to identify the "nemesis" style of music that they feel lies in direct opposition to their chosen style and cite the main reasons their music is the hero and the other style of music is the villain.
Exploratory Teaching	Allows teacher to direct the instruction through lectures, videos, reading, etc.	Addresses cognitive skills of mature adolescents – Caution: Use only for short periods of time and provide opportunities for students to get involved	Control the teaching-learning situation	The Rose that Grew From Concrete, a poem by Tupac Shakur will be given to the students to read. Students will then watch the "Shed No More Tears" music video by 2pac Shakur. Students will then be introduced to the Cornell Note Taking system and guided through a compare/contrast example. Students will be asked to discuss the idea of persona especially related to their use of social media and the idea of having a public social media account vs. having a "spam" or "Finsta" account where only the students' closest friends can see their reality.
Field Trips	Brings the "real world"	Develops responsible behavior – Connects the	Planning is important	During the reading of *Night* by Elie Weisel, students will take a trip to the Holocaust Museum in St. Louis where they will hear the stories of

	into the classroom	real with the theoretical or abstract		victims and experience the catalytic events that lead to Weisel's powerful book.
Homework	Reinforces classroom learning	Provides opportunities to expand on classroom instruction – Reinforces and strengthens learning	Coordination among teachers is important to avoid overwhelming students	Students will assigned a photo essay called "The Ground that Grows Me." They will be asked to photograph places and objects in or around their home that they feel impact the person they are becoming. They will then turn the photos into a presentation with captions explaining the significance of the places and objects.
Individualized Instruction	Provides personal attention – Allows individual pacing of instruction – Permits a variety of instructional practices – Reinforces or builds on concepts	Asks young adolescents to assume more responsibility for their own learning – Provides developmentally appropriate instruction designed for the individual student – Monitors and evaluates each student in terms of his/her potential rather than in comparison to other students	Tailor instruction precisely to a student's needs – Develop a number of personalized instructional plans for a given curriculum goal	At the beginning of the academic year, students will be introduced to the idea of the "smash book." They will decorate their smash book any way they see fit. The book's theme will be "What I Want You to Know" and will be an ongoing letter to the teacher. At the end of each unit, students will be asked to create an honest "spread" about what they did and did not learn, retain, were confused about, etc. The teacher will evaluate each student's spread and create a spread that communicates a plan for intervention and guides them on how to express their need for help or how to signal the teacher when they are not understanding.
Inductive Discovery	Encourages working from the specific to the development of a generalization; ex.-observe ants and beetles, classify the observations into categories,	Allows active involvement in learning – Work in groups allows socialization – Cognitive development allows consideration of a number of characteristics simultaneously	Guide students away from wrong generalizations	Teacher will coordinate with kindergarten teachers for this activity. Students will be asked to work in groups of three and research why and how it came to be that students become part of the public school system at age 5. Students will be asked to create a list of interview questions and will then videotape interviews with three kindergartners. Students will compare the interviews and develop a list of competencies that answer the question: Is every five-year-old a kindergartner? They will categorize their subjects, based on interviews, as not ready, ready, or ready to move up.

	and draw conclusions			
Learning Centers	Encourages independent, student-paced work – May cross curricular boundaries – Can meet a variety of student needs or learning styles	Allows independent work – Provides opportunities for creative work and enrichment experiences – Meets the diverse learning needs of young adolescents	Design centers carefully to meet various readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles – Include all necessary materials	After completing the poem "The Raven" by Edgar Allen Poe, students will be asked to construct a reflection on the poem. Learning centers will include: Art: Painting or creating a sketch or collage that reflects the poem's mood or tone. Music: Creating a playlist of modern songs that might have inspired Poe to write the poem. Writing: Students can write their reflections Digital media: Students can create a movie trailer for a movie based on the poem. Moodboard: Students will use Pinterest to create a board containing imagery and quotes that reflect the mood and tone. Kinesthetic: Students can create a TikTok dance to a beat or song that is free to use. The dance must reflect the action in the poem. Teacher Time: Students can spend time in small groups with the teacher to gain a better understanding of the poem.
Lecture	Conveys information to a large number of students at one time	Can be powerful motivating device if the lecturer is interesting and enthusiastic	Use only briefly – Address only a few clear points – Capture student interest – Encourage student comments and questions – Have a clear summary	Students will "meet" Scout Finch, the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, who will take them through a summary of the story they are about to read. The teacher will dress as Scout and portray a Southern accent. This will be the frontload before beginning the book.
Peer-Tutoring	Allows students to learn from each other – Frees teacher to work with other students	Promotes socialization among cultures and both genders – Reinforces the tutor's skills	Teach students how to tutor, what attitudes to take, how to encourage, and how to motivate – Monitor to be sure that the tutor's own learning and progress does not suffer	First, students will be taught about self-advocacy, that it is ok not to understand, but it is not ok to be satisfied with that. An interest inventory will be given to see who is interested in being a peer tutor. We will keep a board on the wall with a color-coded system – green post-its are for students who feel confident with the learning material, yellow post-its are for students who are

				keeping up but could use some enrichment, and red post-its are for students who need help. The green students will be utilized as peer tutors as we move through units and day-by-day activity. Those who are green will most likely change from unit to unit.
Projects	Allows students to create a product such as a paper, model, skit, television spot, etc.	Addresses young adolescents' diversities in abilities and interests	Require approval in advance of all projects – Be sure that the project meets the objectives of the lesson or unit – Use a scoring guide	Focusing on sharing the school mission and vision, we will pull out action words – for example, "empower." We will discuss the meaning of empowerment and then relate it to inward reflection. What is something you can do to empower yourself? Based on that, students will be asked to create a product line – jewelry, food, clothing, that speaks to how they need to empower themselves. (I did this with my sophomores and they LOVED it… one girl brought in supplies to make word bracelets for everyone in the class! So fun!)
Role-Playing and Simulation	Permits work with realistic problems and situations	Encourages active involvement with learning	Use a follow-up activity to promote understanding	Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce are breaking up! At least they are in my class! Students are presented with a Taylor mask or a Travis mask, and they draw various adjectives used to project tone and imbibe mood. One is Taylor, who is breaking up with Travis – the tone drawn is "arrogant" and the mood drawn is "apologetic." The students must deliver and react according to their assigned tone or mood. (Also did this with my sophomores as EOC prep, and they LOVED IT!)
Service Learning	Involves students in the community – Advances academic goals – Promotes essential skills in real-life contexts –	Reinforces the content that is learned in school – Develops skill to become productive citizens	Tailor to meet the needs of both the students population and the community – Tie to instructional objectives	Students will organize a "gift boutique" with items they bring from home. The boutique will include coming up with a name a description, collecting and describing the items, setting up a display, and having a grand opening. Students will film commercials for the boutique and will host a grand opening. Everything in the boutique will be free and it will open before the weekend of Mother's Day. With a high poverty rate, this will provide an

	Reinforces and refines learning objectives from the classroom			opportunity for students who do not have the means to give their mothers or a female role model in their life something special. Students will reflect on the process, how they feel it went, and how the whole period “working for nothing” was working for something intangible but meaningful.