

Criteria I: Development of New Learning

How the teacher developed new learning:

- Reading Publications: *Teaching What Matters Most: Standards and Strategies for Raising Student Achievement* by Richard W. Strong, Harvey F. Silver, Matthew J. Perini
Teaching With Love & Logic by Fay, Funk
- Conversations and consultations with mentors, health curriculum leaders, and English language learner instructors.

What the teacher learned:

- Students need a firm understanding of lesson objectives in a variety of different contexts
- Students learn more by doing rather than listening through command teaching
- What type of differentiated instruction is most effective and important in each lesson
- Include supplemental interventions to support all students regardless of the lesson
- What type of routine works best for each student in the different classroom settings

Criteria II: Impact on Practice

- Initiated parent intervention of student who is consistently struggling
- Arranged for ELA counselor to work with student on challenging assignments
- Acknowledgment of struggling students and implementing strategies
- Student and teacher collaborated on specific strategies for each student with a 504/IEP plan

Criteria III: Impact on Students

- Increased engagement of all students
- Consistent discussions with peers and teacher
- Reached the objective for the lesson focus

Indicator 2: Using differentiated instruction and supplemental interventions to support students with learning difficulties, disabilities and/or particular gifts and talents. Note: differentiated instruction applies to all students (tier one) and supplemental instruction applies to students in tiers two and three.

Goal: I will research and implement several ways to differentiate instruction to support students with learning difficulties, disabilities and/or particular gifts and talents. Students that I will focus on include

ELL and ADHD students. I will use these differentiation strategies to help students in my tenth grade health class. (Based on Indicator 2)

Initial Summary: Using the CCT Performance Profile with my mentor, I identified differentiation as an area of instruction that needs to be addressed. When teaching, I realized that I struggle with meeting the variety of learning needs of my students. I constantly teach in a whole group setting, rather than providing my students with more options for differentiated instruction. I constantly struggle with effective methods for giving different instructions and materials to my students during a lesson. I am aware that several of my students need differentiated instruction in my class, and should have the opportunity to learn according to their abilities. I would like to approach my teaching with the notion that all students need different ways of learning to fully understand the material being taught.

Reflection Paper:

As I began planning for the instruction module, I sat down with my mentor and discussed my own concerns about students who were not reaching the appropriate level of challenge during my instruction, or who believed that the material being taught was too easy. Together, we identified the area of instruction that needed to be addressed through the approach of differentiated instruction. When teaching, I realized that my students who struggled with English as a second language or have ADHD, have more trouble paying attention than other demographics. I understand that I need to tailor my instruction in order to support both my students with learning disabilities, as well as challenge those who are academically gifted. If I do this, all of my students will leave my classroom with a better understanding of the material being taught. In addition, I will also try to design and implement a variety of activities to keep my students engaged in each lesson with the intention of increasing student achievement and understanding.

The basic goal of differentiation is that a teacher will adapt to the disparity of student understanding in the classroom (Tomlinson, 2000). Teachers will adapt their classroom to meet the needs of all students through differentiating the content, activity, projects, and learning environment. To

broaden my knowledge on how to differentiate instruction in a mixed-ability classroom, I read *Teaching What Matters Most: Standards and Strategies for Raising Student Achievement* by Richard W. Strong, Harvey F. Silver, and Matthew J. Perini. This book led me to select three specific differentiation strategies to support my English language learners and ADHD students, as well as those students who might need an extra challenge. These three differentiation strategies include think-pair-share, choice boards, and the targeting of different learning-styles within each lesson.

To learn more about think-pair-share, I consulted with an English teacher who does an effective job of keeping her students engaged throughout class discussions. This strategy is broken down into three sections that are simple and efficient when used correctly. The “think mode” allows students to first think independently by writing or silently thinking. Then, the students meet with their peers in either a small group, or with a partner to share their responses. Lastly, the students share their responses with the class. This can be accomplished by the teacher randomly calling on students, or the students volunteering answers that they previously discussed. This strategy fit well with my students who were struggling, required extra support, or who were in need of a challenge. As I walked around the classroom, I encouraged students to engage in conversations, to share their responses, and to ask their partner questions, even if they didn’t understand the material. Anticipating that the group that needs extra support would have difficulty getting started, I made sure I put them with partners who enjoy participating in class discussions and work well with others.

According to the Buck Institute for Education, using project-based learning and allowing for student choice on certain assignments helps students take ownership of their learning. It also provides them with more opportunities to reach the lesson objective. To achieve this, I knew that I needed to first set an objective that I wanted all students to meet, and create multiple ways of meeting that objective. I created a choice board that included four skills that are essential to interpersonal communication: defining vocabulary, identifying the effects of social media and communication, conflicts of resolution,

and empathy for others. Students will have a choice of two or three options that best fit their learning style. The four skills will be broken down into nine activities that can be completed at stations around the classroom. The students will choose which three activities that they want to complete, and will be given a certain number of points for each one chosen. For the student to best comprehend the material, I must first read through the directions as students follow along, and then visit each station to explain what I am looking for. The students will then choose how they go about completing the task. By presenting it in smaller chunks, I can better ensure that students will understand it, and have the opportunity to ask questions. Additionally, each activity will be worth a certain amount of points so that, by the end of the period, all students will have the same amount of points and will have reached the lesson objective. Additionally, to assist my English Language Learners, I modified the stations that dealt with the effects of social media on communication. Accordingly, I rewrote the article and removed the metaphors that could be confusing to an ELL student. Not only was the "choice-project" effective, it kept all students engaged, and allowed for all of my student subgroups (ELL, SPED, etc.) to achieve the lesson objective.

It is believed that individuals process information differently according to their particular learning style. In the last couple of activities, I collected some formal assessments. These assessments showed that fifteen out of twenty-five students understood what the four macronutrients are and how to create a healthy lifestyle around poor food habits. This data surprised me. So I realized that I needed to learn how to tailor my teaching to suit my students' learning styles. Depending on the lesson, students will be reaching educational objectives through several different learning styles. These consist of visual learners, aural, verbal, auditory, social and kinesthetic learners. To allow all students the best understanding of the material that compliments their learning style, having a jigsaw based classroom will increase students' attitudes, behavior and comprehension of the lesson. The jigsaw classroom, which focuses on the unit of nutrition, consists of ten easy steps. Students are divided into 5 or 6 groups with one student a group leader. With this, I chose a leader that understood nutrients the best and could

convey the material to his or her peers in the most effective way. With the lesson on nutrients, it is then broken into 5-6 segments; the benefits of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, the effects of sugar on the body and mind, and how to live a healthy lifestyle. Each student is assigned one segment based on their learning style. My ELL student who needed extra help paired up with a classmate who was assigned the same segment. This helped my student understand the material better, since she felt like she could do some of the work on her own at certain points. Each student presents their segment to the group, and encourages others to ask questions for clarification. If further clarifications are needed, I walked over to each group to assist. At the end of the session, I gave a quick exit ticket that was counted as their quiz grade. Both my ELL and ADHD students had the option to use Kahoot to take it. I found that all of my students benefited from this activity, especially those who most needed differentiated instruction.

Overall, my students responded well to the differentiation activities that I used throughout the unit. I noticed that they were quick to initiate activities that fit their learning style and needs for instruction, communicated with their peers through group work, and increased their productivity. The evidence from my assessments suggested that these new methods I employed were leading to student success in my classroom. Over the course of two months, nineteen out of the twenty five students had a score of 75 percent or higher on the final test, while those students who needed differentiated instruction had improved their grades by at least a full letter grade. I believe that consistently using differentiated instruction within lessons leads to a more productive and successful classroom. My data suggested that all of my students demonstrated increased understanding of the material, not merely those who are academically gifted.

As I reflect over this process, I realize that I have made gains in multiple areas of my instruction. By experimenting with a variety of different teaching strategies and learning styles, I have noticed that I am now able to reach all students rather than just those who have been successful in previous lessons. The level of student engagement is much greater than previous units, and I have seen an increase in

accountability and student achievement. Going forward I will continue to encourage my students to seek individualized paths to learning through my instructional strategies. With the proper pacing, appropriate differentiation, and continual progress monitoring, I believe that my students will be able to create a deeper understanding of health education. However, I will be a vigilant instructor in making sure that all students are fully comprehending the material through their various learning styles.