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Join us for two days of incredible programming designed to inspire and energize your classroom. Get faculty-led best practices to transform your lectures and unlock student success. Register Now Find content for your course by searching the keyword, title, discipline or author below: This article will provide you with an understanding of what pedagogy is, why its important for every classroom and how pedagogy has been evolving to take 21st-century skills and learning into account. Youll learn about the different aspects of pedagogy, as well as some common pedagogical knowledge and approaches. Examples for each will provide greater insight into how you can apply different pedagogical teaching styles to your own classroom. With tips on creating your own pedagogy, including taking into account how digital technology and online and collaborative work are changing teaching, youll understand why and how having a clear and concise pedagogy can support your curriculum. There are countless pedagogies that can work for your course. Download our free guide, which highlights and explains 9 different pedagogical approaches and how they can be used to keep your students motivated and engaged. 1.0. What is pedagogy? 1.1. Why is pedagogy important? 1.2. How do you say pedagogy? 2.0. Different types of pedagogy 2.1. What is constructivist pedagogy? 2.2. What is inquiry-based learning? 2.3. What is the Socratic method? 2.4. What is problem-based learning 2.5. What is collaborative learning? 2.6. What is integrative pedagogy? 2.7. What is reflective pedagogy? 2.8. What is critical pedagogy? 2.9. What is culturally responsive teaching? 3.0. Creating your own pedagogy 3.1. How can pedagogy support your curriculum? 3.2. How does pedagogy impact the learner? 4.0. How is pedagogy changing? 4.1. Online learning 4.2. Personalizing pedagogies 5.0. Conclusion Pedagogy is often confused with curriculum. The definition of pedagogy refers to how we teachthe theory and practice of educating. Curriculum refers to the material being taught. Pedagogy, meaning the relationship between learning techniques and culture, is determined based on an educators beliefs about how learning takes place. Pedagogy requires meaningful classroom interactions between educators and learners. The goal is to help students build on prior learning and develop skills and attitudes. For educators, the aim is to present the curriculum in a way that is relevant to student needs. Shaped by the educators own experiences, pedagogy must take into consideration the context in which learning takes place, and with whom. It isnt about the materials used, but the process and the strategy adopted to lead to the achievement of meaningful cognitive learning. In a literal sense, the word pedagogy stems from the Greek word that effectively means the art of teaching children. More specifically, agogos means leader in Greek, and pedagogue refers to the teacher. Paidagogos were slaves tasked with taking boys to school and back, teaching them manners and tutoring them. Pedagogy is theteachingof children or dependent personalities. This means that it is up to the instructor to determine how, what and when course concepts are learned. Andragogy is the facilitation of learning for adults, who are self-directed learners. Adults are primarily driven by intrinsic motivation and can solve complex problems relying on past experiences. This must be taken into account in order to best support them in retaining new ideas, learning new ways of problem-solving, and strengthening independent thinking. Having a well-thought-out pedagogy can improve the quality of your teaching and the way students learn, helping them gain a deeper grasp of fundamental material. Being mindful of the way you teach can help you better understand how to help students achieve deeper learning. And it can, in turn, impact student perception, resulting in cooperative learning environments. The proper pedagogical approach helps students move beyond simple forms of thinking as defined in the Blooms taxonomy pyramid, like basic memorization and comprehension, to complex learning processes like analysis, evaluation, and creation. Students can leverage their preferred learning styles with a teaching process that supports them, and the way they like to learn. Pedagogy is pronounced differently in various countries. The International Phonetic Alphabet pronunciation is pdodi/ /pddi/. In both the U.K. and U.S., its often pronounced ped-a-gaug-gee (as in geese) though some use the j sound and pronounce it paidag-o-jee (as in the seventh letter of the alphabet, g.) Others, particularly in the U.K., say pe-de-gaw-jee, with more of an ugh sound in the middle, and replace the go sound with gaw. The Merriam-Webster dictionary suggests it should be pe-de-go-je (or ga). There are countless pedagogies that can help you engage students. By implementing activities from different pedagogical techniques in your classroom, youll ensure students can tackle learning in a way that best meets their needs. Here, we outline nine pedagogical approaches that help students develop higher-order thinking skills and provide a more nuanced understanding of how their learnings fit into the world around them. Constructivist teaching strategies help students understand the meaning of their learning materials, instead of just passively ingesting content. Rather than focusing on the subject or lesson being taught, educators are encouraged to focus on how the student learns. KWL(H) Charts are a great way to get an overview of student progress throughout the term. After finishing a unit or series of lessons, have learners fill out a chart with the following fields: What we know, What we want to know, What we have learned, How we know it. Inquiry-based learning encourages students to ask questions and complete research while learning various concepts. The pedagogy focuses on helping learners acquire the skills necessary to develop their own ideas, as well as question themselves and group members in a constructive way. The four steps of inquiry-based learning are: Developing problem statements that require students to pitch their question using a constructed response, further inquiry and citation. Researching the topic using time in class where the instructor can guide students in their learnings Presenting what theyve learned to their peers or to a small group Asking students to reflect on what worked about the process and what didnt. Students focus on how they learned in addition to what they learned, to activate metacognition skills (or thinking about thinking). An example of inquiry-based learning: One way to incorporate inquiry-based learning in your classroom is through oral history projects. Ask students to research the personal histories of an individual of their choice, conduct interviews with the person (if possible) and create a presentation that includes artifacts, a feature article, a personal memoir and a photograph. The Socratic method is a traditional pedagogy named after Greek philosopher Socrates, who taught students by asking a series of questions. The principle underlying the Socratic method is that students learn through the use of critical thinking, reason and logic. To implement Socratic learning strategies in your classroom, arrange students in inner and outer circles. The inner circle engages in discussion, while the outer circle observes and takes notes. The outer circle then shares their observations and questions the inner circle with guidance from the instructor.The Socratic Method is one of many tools that professors at the University of Chicago Law School use to help theirstudents become lawyers. Elizabeth Garrett writes that The Socratic Method provides all students greater confidence about talking to large groups, allows them to develop the ability to argue forcefully and persuasively, and teaches them to think critically. In problem-based learning, students acquire knowledge by devising a solution to a real-world problem. As they do, they acquire knowledge, as well as communication and collaboration skills. Concept mapping is an engaging activity that helps students tackle complex course concepts. Divide the class into teams and present them with a course-related problem. One team member writes down a solution and passes the sheets of paper along to the next team member, who builds upon that idea and then passes it along to the rest of the team. In the end, a spokesperson can present their ultimate solution.In a study monitoring the learning of students in an Engineering course, the research found that participants learning gains from problem-based learning were two times their gains from a traditional lecture. Collaborative pedagogy rejects the notion that students can think, learn and write effectively in isolation. Collaborative pedagogy is a learner-centered strategy that strives to maximize critical thinking, learning and writing skills through peer-to-peer interaction and interpersonal engagement. Set up stations or posters in a few locations around the classroom and get students to participate in a gallery walk. Divide students into small groups and have them rotate between each station together sorting their observations into categories. Finally, ask them to write down a list of questions about the source material they are viewing. Integrative learning is the process of making connections between concepts and experiences so that information and skills can be applied to novel and complex issues or challenges. Hands-on learning experiences, like community service, are a great way to bring integrative pedagogy into the classroom. Holding fundraisers, volunteering at local schools or eldercare homes or preparing meals for those experiencing food insecurity are forms of experiential learning that can help students take part in community service activities, like volunteering at food kitchens, tutoring children in local schools, or working in local prisons and detention centers to help with literacy skills, like Queens Students for Literacy. Reflective pedagogy encourages the instructor to reflect upon lessons, projects and assessments, with the goal of improving them for future use. Students are also encouraged to reflect on their performance on assessments and look for areas where they can improve. Conversation stations are a great way for students to engage with their peers and reflect on their own learnings. Instructors start by sharing a list of discussion questions pertaining to a course reading, video or case study. Students are put into groups and given five-to-ten minutes to discuss, before rotating to another group. The students who have just joined a group have an opportunity to share findings from their last discussion, before answering the second question with their new group.Similarly, reflective pedagogy is useful when used as a complement to placement-based internships. These pedagogical strategies allow students to understand what they have learned and experienced on a deeper level. Critical pedagogy asserts that issues of social justice and democracy are not distinct from acts of teaching and learning. It is a theory and practice that helps students question and challenge prevalent beliefs and practicesand achieve critical consciousness. Flipped classroom strategies aim to increase student engagement and learning by having students complete readings at home and then work on live problem-solving during class time. These strategies allow instructors to orient their teaching to be knowledge-based, focusing on the development of critical thinking skills and understanding what it means to create a just society. Culturally responsive teaching is a more modern pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to and celebrates fundamental cultures. It strives to offer equitable access to education for students from all cultures. Use learning stations in your classroom to accommodate a variety of student learning styles at the same time. Whether due to culture, socialization, preference or learning needs, students respond differently to a variety of content. You can provide a range of material to each student by setting up learning stations where students can play a game or watch a video. To create your own pedagogy, start by forming a personal philosophy of teaching statement. This is a crucial step in the profession of teaching. This helps students manage their expectations about your teaching methods and better approach your curriculum. Critically, make sure to support students in finding the best ways to understand the subject matter and encourage engaging discussions in the classroom. Its also important to be mindful of the different educational experiences students have and their preferred methods of participation, as well as their personal experiences and backgrounds. That might include monitoring for cues like wait time between talking in a conversation, eye contact or using written forms of communication, like discussion threads. You can use real-world experiences to demonstrate abstract concepts, and link them back to everyday experiences to which students can relate. Followed by activities that are purpose-built to involve students, this helps learners break down course concepts in their own ways. Pedagogy can allow students to gain a deeper understanding of subject matter and can help them apply their learnings to their own personal experiences outside the classroom. Teachers can work together with students to come up with the best way for subject matter to be studied. Once youve created your own pedagogy in higher education, you can then develop course material and activities that are challenging for students. This will assist them in cognitive development, ensuring that they advance their understanding of concepts to higher levels. With a clear understanding of your pedagogy, students can follow your instruction and feedback clearly. They know what they need to do and how to do it, and can respond in kind. This encourages engaging dialogue between educators and students, as well as among students themselvesthats because everyone shares ideas, questions, and knowledge to explore concepts and deepen their knowledge. With a clear and concise understanding of pedagogy, everyone is on the same page. Students can comfortably share ideas and understand how curriculum will be approached and whats expected of them. Students expand their knowledge base, but also understand how to use their learnings in authentic and relevant real-world contexts. They can draw on their own cultural knowledge as well to come up with unique and personalized thoughts and opinions. Concrete evidence, facts and data, are combined with the exploration of cultural differences of others to further expand knowledge. This allows students to reflect on new concepts and open their minds to different approaches. Through your pedagogical strategies, students can also learn what approaches work best for them: Which learning activities and learning styles they tend to gravitate towardsand how to develop concepts and build mental models to further their learningare all important elements to consider. Overall, active learning makes student engagement rise. Students get to participate in personalized teaching strategies, rather than be mere spectators in the classroom. Pedagogy has been evolving to better support 21st-century skills and ideas. The traditional classroom lecture is no longer as effective as it once was. Teaching has expanded to include new forms of learning, like interactive and collaborative projects and online and remote curricula, and to accommodate more flexible schedules. Real-world scenarios and cultural differences are being taken into account, affording students new ways to acquire, construct and organize their learning. Pedagogy is shifting focus beyond basic memorization and application of simple procedures to aiding students in higher-order learning, including critical thinking skills, effective communication, and greater autonomy. Online learning has become a significant part of higher education. Any modern pedagogy must account for students finding, analyzing and applying knowledge from a growing number of online tools, platforms and sources. Higher-order skills, like critical thinking and the ability to learn more independently, as well as in larger groups, are essential for engaging in online learning in a meaningful way. Students must be comfortable using technology to help them learn, and to access, share, and create useful information and gain better fluency in a subject. Educators, in turn, can use technology to enhance course materials and further support their pedagogies through blended learning that combines classrooms with online teaching, flipped classrooms that provide materials students can access after class, like videos, lecture notes, quizzes, and further readings, and overall wider access to sources and experts online. They can integrate new forms of technology to teach, like videos, animations, and simulations through sources like YouTube channels, podcasts and clickers. Digital textbooks can incorporate content like video and audio clips, animations, and rich graphics that students can access and annotate. All of this content enhances the experience for students, and particularly benefits students who are struggling. It can also reduce spending since students have plenty of valuable, real-time updated information at their fingertips for free. Its critical that what youre teaching students is relevant and meaningful, and personalized to their experiences. The increase in non-formal, self-directed learning methods means that students have more access to information than ever before. It makes it easier for educators to track their learning through digital activities. But it also requires more attention in guiding them to the right sources, adjusting lecture content and adopting approaches purpose-built for engagement and collaboration. In many innovative pedagogies, theres a power shared between educator and student. Students learn more independently, instead of following a set course of lectures and textbooks from an instructor. In many cases, students thrive in self-directed learning methods, while educators can use lecture time more effectively for discussion and collaborative work. The educator, then, becomes a critical guide and assessor for students, linking them to accepted sources of information and emphasizing the importance of accreditation. They are no longer the only source of information, delivered in chunks via lectures. And this requires an overhaul of the strategy towards how student learning is achieved, monitored and assessed. Pedagogies are constantly evolving. You can develop your own, inspired by common ones and modified for 21st-century learning. A pedagogy must fit your audience, and focus on helping students develop an understanding of the material beyond basic memorization and surface knowledge. Students should be able to relate concepts back to the real world, and even their own lives. Every pedagogy is different. A good starting point is to create a philosophy of teaching statement that outlines your communication goals as an instructor, and how you plan to relate the work you do in the classroom to professional development once the student moves on to a career. Then, design classroom experiences around this philosophy, work with students to adapt methods to encourage positive responses and determine how you will evaluate and assess their performance. Its also worth considering how you will integrate technology into lesson plans and classwork, as well as promote inclusivity. Taking all of this into consideration makes for a great recipe for a successful pedagogical approach. The more aware you are of the way you are teaching, the better youll understand what works best for your students. Download the free guide: 9 Pedagogical Approachesand How to Use Them in Your Course The Top Hat mobile app makes it easy to stay on track in and outside of class. Confirm your attendance, respond to polls and discussions, get timely notifications, and access your courseworkwhenever and wherever you want. Extend engagement beyond the classroom. Personalize a textbook from our catalogincluding dynamic OERor create your own interactive materials. Plus, keep a pulse on student learning with built-in assessments. Explore Interactive Textbooks Adopt Interactive OpenStax Build Your Custom Text Instructional strategies refer to the techniques instructors use to deliver their lessons. Effective instructional strategiesalso known as teaching strategieshelp students become actively involved in the learning process. When done right, instructional strategies also support students in reaching their learning objectives. By reading the guide below (our downloading this free list of instructional strategies), youll gain a solid understanding of the various types of teaching strategies, why theyre important and how they can be applied to the learning process to benefit both professors and students. In this guide, youll: Learn what instructional strategies are, and the various strategies educators can use to teach more effectively Gain a deeper understanding of how instructional strategies for teachersincluding formal and informal assessments, case studies, debates, flipped classrooms and moreplay into the overall student learning experience Get equipped to implement instructional strategies that are appropriate for your course in order to become more effective at teaching and engaging students Get access to a free instructional strategies list, packed with 25 easy-to-implement exercises for your next course With this collection of teaching strategies, youll be ready to guide students towards success in any classroom setting. Plus, putting a few of these techniques into practice will ensure students come to class prepared to engage with the material, with their peers and with you. Instructional strategies encompass any type of learning technique a teacher uses to help students learn or gain a better understanding of the course material. They allow teachers to make the learning experience more fun and practical and can also encourage students to take more of an active role in their education. The objective of using instructional strategies beyond subject comprehension is to create students who are independent, strategic learners. The hope is, with time and practice, students will be able to select the right strategies on their own and use them effectively to complete tasks. There are various instructional strategy examples that can be used effectively at all levels and subject areas, with a wide range of learning styles. These learning strategies motivate students by improving their engagement, capturing their attention and encouraging them to focus on not only remembering course material, but truly understanding it. Educators who use instructional strategies allow students to make meaningful connections between concepts learned in class and real-life situations. They offer an opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge and course correct on their own when needed. Teachers also benefit from using instructional strategies because theyre able to better monitor and assess student performance through different methods of evaluation. In the dynamic landscape of higher education, understanding the nuances between instructional strategies, teaching strategies, teaching techniques, and teaching practices is crucial for educators aiming to enhance their pedagogical approach. Instructional strategies encompass a broader framework, outlining the overarching plans and methods employed to facilitate learning. These strategies guide the selection of teaching methods and techniques, serving as the foundation for effective educational practices. On the other hand, teaching strategies delve into the specific approaches instructors use to convey information and engage students. These strategies act as the vehicles through which instructional goals are achieved, embracing diverse methodologies such as collaborative learning, active participation, and technology integration. Zooming in further, teaching techniques are the tactical tools and methods employed within a specific teaching strategy. These are the hands-on practices educators implement to deliver content, foster understanding, and promote critical thinking. Examples include case studies, role-playing, and interactive discussions. Finally, teaching practices encompass the comprehensive application of instructional, teaching, and technical strategies in the classroom. It reflects the amalgamation of various methods tailored to the unique needs of learners and the subject matter. By dissecting these components, higher education professors can refine their pedagogical repertoire, fostering a rich and dynamic learning environment for their students. There are far too many types of instructional or teaching strategies to catalog in one place. And theres no single, specific way to group them together. While the categories below are by no means exhaustive, instructional strategies often fall under general groupings. These include: active learning, assessment-based, group-based, advanced strategies, organizational (or classroom management) and tiered. Before students leave your learning environment, ask them to answer a question related to a key concept discussed in the lesson that day. They can write it down on a piece of paper or index card. Questions can be simple, like asking students what they found most interesting about the lesson. Or, they can be more complex, such as having them draw a sketch that demonstrates what they learned, or asking them to connect the key concept they learned to a real-life situation. Have students hand the tickets to you as they exit (or have them submit a response to your discussion board), then review the responses. The feedback can help educators determine which students need additional teaching in specific areas. Using this approach, teachers gain a quick understanding of how the whole class is grasping and reacting to the material. Use the information from the exit tickets to form groups in the class that follows. Place students at similar levels of understanding, or who have similar views on a topic, together. Conversely, group students with opposing views together in order to foster debate and conversation. Learn more about the types of exit tickets you can use in your next coursedownload an exit ticket template here. Regardless of where you teach, flipping your classroom is one of the most popular forms of active learning and among the most well-known instructional strategies. Instead of using classroom time for lecturing, educators provide students with a pre-recorded lecture to watch prior to class. Theyre often concise, posted to sites like YouTube, or presented in the form of a podcast that students can listen to at home or during their commute. Educators can then use classroom time to engage students in learning activities related to the lecture theyve already seen or heard. Flipped classrooms are an effective teaching technique because they allow students to review and learn concepts on their own time. Students are then free to complete more interactive and collaborative work in class, including discussions and tasks with their peers and teacher. They can also collaborate and discuss material online, via forum discussions with peers and subject matter experts. In class, students can actively apply concepts via peer learning, group work, and presentations. Flipped learning helps keep students continuously engaged in class instead of just passively listening. And it makes good use of downtime by allowing students to combine a workout or commute time with further learning, when its most convenient for them. Built to enable this strategy, Top Hat makes it simple to adopt a flipped classroomsimply run quizzes prior to your lecture and create interactive discussions for students to collaborate during class time. Looking for more? Get 25 additional instructional strategies in this free guide. This instructional strategy lets students record their thoughts, feelings and reflections on a variety of topics. Journal entries could refer to something discussed in your lecture, or they can allow students to reflect on a relevant newspaper article or piece of media they came across. Journals can also be used for getting students to think critically about the course material and how it can be applied to the real world. This activity lets students make predictions, brainstorm ideas, connect ideas and even identify solutions to problems presented in class. You might consider using the following prompts in advance of a journaling assignment to promote higher-level thinking. At the start of a lesson, you might ask, What questions do you have from yesterday? During the middle of a lesson, ask, What do you want to know more about? At the end of your lesson, ask, How could you use these findings outside of class? Encourage students to note any thoughts that come to mind at these three points. At the end of the semester, their journal can form the foundation of a more comprehensive study guide. Pose a question about the days teaching, and give students a moment to reflect before writing down their answer on their own or in pairs. The responses can provide valuable insight into student comprehension of the material. Minute papers can be presented in a number of ways, but the easiest is a ticket out, whereby educators wrap up class a few minutes early. (We saw this earlier in our instructional strategies list, under exit ticket). They then ask students to answer what the most important thing they learned today was and what questions they still have. The first question requires students to think quickly, recall class material, decide on the main points, and put it into their own words. For the second, they must think further about what theyve understood thus far. Teachers can use the responses to determine how well students understand the material. Minute papers can also help students understand where their own learning gaps are. Once this is realized, both students and teachers can identify and address weaknesses. The muddiest point is another active learning instructional strategy. This activity asks students to use index cards (or an app), to anonymously submit what part(s) of the course material theyre having the most difficulty with. Educators can then use the responses to determine where extra instruction is needed and adjust lessons accordingly. Alternatively, these topics can be addressed during student review sessions. Ask students to identify topics they feel they need clarification on and consolidate these into a list. Then get each student to select a term from the list they feel they can explain to the rest of the class. Cross it off the list, and move on to the next. By the end, it will be easy to see which concepts students are having the most issues with by process of elimination. And if terms havent been selected, they are being avoided for a reason. Naturally, students will pick the terms they are most comfortable with. Use that information to devise more instructor-led sessions on the concepts that most students are confused about, or that require more clarification, to eventually complete the entire list. Hand out blank index cards or a pre-designed worksheet at the end of a class session and ask students to use them to submit a response to a question about the days lesson. Alternatively, ask students to submit a discussion board response. The reflection prompt could be simple, like asking what they learned, or what they found the most interesting. Or, you can make your prompt more application-based, like asking them to connect what they learned to a real-life situation, or telling them to explain why what they learned is important. The purpose of reflection is to encourage students to consider what they have learned. Like a number of other instructional strategies in this list, it also gives the teacher an idea of where students stand on a topic or issue so they can use this information to help better prepare for the next lesson. The added benefit is that having students express these thoughts on paper can result in better memory retention. To drive this strategy in higher education, Top Hats interactive discussions make it easy for students to reflect on what was covered in class. Allow students to discuss concepts with their peers, with the ability to grade discussions as desired. This active learning technique is another of the best-known instructional strategies. After presenting a lesson, pause the lecture for a moment to ask students to pair up with a partner. Have them discuss the material they just learned. Prepare questions, and, once theyve had some time to discuss with their partner(s), get students to take turns presenting their observations to the rest of the class. Make the question challenging, such that it could spark debate between the grouped or paired students. Give them just a few minutes to talk amongst themselves and come to a collective conclusion. Think-pair-share can work especially well for the first few lessons of a class, keeping students on their toes and interested in the material that is to come. But it can also help recapture student enthusiasm near the middle of a term, reminding students that they arent alone in their learning and that others share their views or concerns, and that there are different perspectives to support an issue that are worth considering beyond their own. One of the most used instructional strategies, assessments are considered any graded test, quiz, project, or exam. Informal checks of student progress throughout the year, such as discussions or presentations, can be included too. There are many different assessment-based instructional strategies (and a few follow in this group). In general, there are various ways to run assessments and different ways to adapt them to class time. These include: asking certain groups of students to only complete specific parts of a test, allowing students to respond orally versus in writing, or asking students to demonstrate what theyve learned in a more hands-on way, like building something or drawing a diagram. The most critical thing to remember with assessments is to try and stay focused on evaluating the concept thats most important for the student to grasp. This might mean your assessments have to be more practical. Asking a student to put the learning to work and actually do something can be a far better indicator of what they know than simple written or oral answers. One tip is to include test or quiz questions that vary in complexity, and focus on different aspects of a concept. You could include one question mandatory for responding, but allow students to choose which ones they want to answer among the remaining ones. Download Now: 25 Free Instructional Strategies Cubing is a version of the above. It involves writing a command or question on each of the six sides of a cube, then having students roll the cube like a die and respond to the question or command accordingly. The questions can relate to describing, comparing, contrasting, applying, predicting or imagining concepts. Get students even more involved in this cooperative learning activity by having them come up with their own questions that they then exchange with classmates, taking turns to answer. Take it to another level by creating multiple cubes with questions of varying levels of complexity. Assign students to work in groupshave each group of students write or dictate their answers to the questions on their cube. Use the data to determine which students should work on which concepts come assignment time. This instructional strategy is ideal for subjects that involve repetitive practices and rote memorization, such as mathematics and language. Have students work on assignments either alone or in pairs, checking and marking their work. This teaching technique is motivational because students instantly know if theyre on the right track, allowing them to gauge their achievement level. But it also helps students immediately correct something theyre doing wrong. Once they identify the mistakes, they can translate that learning to subsequent questions, instead of completing the entire assignment incorrectly. Instructional strategies such as Grade As You Go also help educators pinpoint students who have a superior grasp of the material, allowing them to move on to a more challenging assignment. By the time the assignment is completed, its far more likely that the entire class will be ready to move on to the next concept or skill. And since grades have already been given, it reduces after-class grading time for teachers. Put this strategy into practice this fall by relying on the Top Hat Gradebook. This comprehensive tool lets you view attendance, participation and completion data in one place and makes it easy to retroactively adjust grade weights as needed. The purpose of homework, as one of the numerous assessment-based instructional strategies, is to extend learning beyond the classroom setting. Homework gives students extra time to master concepts studied in class and further refine their learning. To use this effectively, assign homework based on the students skill level, ensuring it aligns with the areas they need more practice in. The amount and complexity of homework varies depending on subject and level. Students should be able to complete homework independently, with minimal involvement from tutors or peers. If they cant, it should serve as a red flag to both the student and educator. Built to enable this strategy, Top Hat makes it easy to create, personalize and assign interactive homework assignments. Choose from a variety of question types including fill-in-the-blank or multiple choice and embed discussion questions throughout your assessments. Question-asking is among the simplest of the instructional strategies, but it can still be strategically complex. The simplest way to gauge student understanding of course material is to ask them questions about it. During group discussions, pose several questions of varying complexity so that everyone has a chance to respond, including both those who are experiencing difficulties with the class, as well as those who are mastering the concepts. Strategically adjust the questions you ask based on who you plan to call upon. This helps build student confidence and ensures the class runs smoothly. Timing is important, too. When the class starts, or theres a pause between concepts or topics, you can administer a quick quiz or poll to get an understanding of how far along students are in their learning. In order to effectively assess comprehension, its best to not attach a grade to this activity. Students will inevitably worry if the quiz is going to impact their overall grade for the class. Platforms like Kahoot! can be used to facilitate informal games or trivia sessions at the start of class, setting the stage for whats to follow in your lecture. Use technology like clickers to administer things like multiple choice quizzes that can be tabulated immediately for large classes, with questions that challenge or check an assumption before a lecture begins. Then, administer the same or a similar quiz at the end of class, and compare the results. Educators can determine how effective the lesson was and see if they need to revisit the subject matter again, or can confidently move on to the next topic. Case studies, as instructional strategies or teaching techniques, are more spontaneous than structured group projects. But this is a good thing. It helps prepare students for when they enter the workforce, where problem solving on the fly is an essential skill. In a practical work environment, students cant just do what theyre told and expect to succeed. Case studies can help prepare them for life after college or university. To use case studies, put students into groups and task them with finding a way to apply the knowledge theyve acquired from reading course materials and listening to lectures into real-world scenarios that match your assigned content area(s). In a classroom setting, working on case studies encourages students to think critically about what theyve learned, not just recite points back to the class. Instructional strategies like these work as a structured form of argumentation. Debates require students to research concepts and think critically in order to present their positions in a convincing and justifiable way. Most fitting for concepts with opposing points of view, debates help students develop listening and presentation skills. Once presented in class, having a debate can also introduce new perspectives on topics, and convince students to conduct further research in order to build stronger arguments, or intelligently counter those of the opposing side. With the teachers guidance, students can prepare and present course material in class, encouraging interaction with peers. Try to do this without the use of slides as an aid, so students have to communicate more with classmates and discover more creative ways to present the material. Its best to do these kinds of student-led instructional strategies at the beginning of a class, so students can teach one another about what they know, sharing their knowledge and experiences that relate to course material. The use of simulations and games in your instructional toolkit can give you a deeper look at the impact of learning, as well as demonstrate how students can invent and experiment with learned concepts. Role playing also offers students a chance to practice their interpersonal skills in an environment in which they are comfortable and familiar. Having the opportunity to visualize, model or role play in dynamic situations promotes curiosity, exploration and problem solving. It can aid students in working towards a greater understanding of the material. The more ways that students have of representing the knowledge theyve acquired beyond writing and oral explanation, the better their comprehension and recall of the information will be. In math and science fields, for example, students can experiment with simulated projects that would otherwise be difficult or cost-prohibitive to do in real settings. Examples include: designing a model of a roller coaster to understand slopes, angles and speed; using a hard-boiled egg to demonstrate Newtons Law of Motion; or building a model volcano to understand what makes them erupt. These instructional strategies encourage educators to identify students who already have advanced knowledge of a subject, skill or concept so they can spend less time on these areas. Curriculum compacting frees students up to focus more on the areas where they need to develop a greater understanding, versus concepts with which theyre already proficient. Its ideal when working with individual students or small groups. If students appear to be ahead of the class, assign them independent study projects. These projects should allow them to focus on a single concept around material discussed in class. They can also work on a separate but related topic for which theyve expressed an interest or passion, making this an inquiry-based learning exercise. Once the project is completed, the student can share what he or she learned with the class, demonstrating their mastery of the concept, and further educating the rest of the class on a specific area or example. Independent study projects usually run anywhere from three to four weeks. An agenda sets out a comprehensive list of the assignments, activities, projects and tests students are responsible for working on and completing throughout the year, along with a timeline for each. Students can decide how they want to complete the work and in what order. Do they want to focus on one area of learning for an entire week? Do they want to tackle the subject matter theyre most comfortable with first, or start with more difficult concepts? In addition to encouraging students to come up with a structure they can follow, agendas help them practice time management skills. To get going, provide each student with a blank calendar to fill in with their own schedule, ensuring theyve organized work in order to meet assignment and project due dates. If different students are working on the same part of an assignment at the same time, consider allowing them to work together during class. Take on the role of a facilitator here, helping students set reasonable deadlines according to their needs. Also referred to as sponge activities, anchor activities are assignments that students must work on immediately in order to maximize instruction time. They can complete these activities at the beginning of every class or right after, but the idea is to keep the learning and educational process going. Anchor activities might include the student revisiting a question posed in the previous days class and composing a response to it, or presenting and discussing an answer out loud to a partner. Another option could be drawing a picture to represent a concept they just learned, or writing down an opinion about a key issue. This instructional strategy for teachers can also be used to provide students with notes as a reference when theyre studying for exams. Be mindful of anchor activities that are simply busy work to pass the time. Just as a sponge soaks up water, the goal of anchor activities is to help students soak up a better understanding of a concept or skill. Before delving into a new topic or concept, have students submit what they already know, what they want to know and what theyve learned already. Then, assess their prior knowledge on the subject, and get a feel for how interested they are in a topic. Knowledge charts, as instructional tools, can also be used at various times to see how students are progressing, and if their interest in the topic is waning or growing. In filling out these graphic organizers, teachers can get an idea of where students are at academically. Students themselves can gauge their own progress and see where more work is needed. Another one of the several instructional strategies aimed at more advanced students is the learning contract. Use it to help students who need to be challenged by providing a specific assignment and list of directives that they must complete within a set period of time. Work with the student to set out the requirements of the contract, and provide a blank calendar they can use to devise a doable timeline, determining what dates and times they need in order to complete different parts of the assignment. This is an effective instructional strategy to help students set their own learning goals and practice time management skillsboth of which are useful in the working world. Once the contract and timeline are set, encourage students who are working on the same parts of the assignment at the same time to work together. Portfolios allow students to gather, organize and illustrate examples of their learning and academic achievements. Portfolio development is the process of creating, collecting, reflecting on and selecting work samples that best showcase students understanding of a given concept. Once students select their top pieces that best represent their learning outcomes, they can then use a binder or scrapbook to organize their work. Work samples kept in a portfolio might include notes from an interview, a diagram, storyboards, essays, infographics and more. Portfolio development is a necessary and effective process for most humanities and STEM majors. Art students can use a portfolio to curate their top pieceswhether paintings, drawings or photographsat the end of the semester. Alternatively, students in architecture or engineering courses can use a portfolio to house mockups and wireframes of a new building or the parts of an engine. No two students portfolios will include the same work since these differ based on discipline and course. Set up three or four activities of varying complexity for students to participate in. Each should have the same common goal of helping students understand a specific element of the subject material. For example, it might be different experiments that all explain the basic concept of physics. Start with a mid-level activity that would apply to most students in the class, then include one thats a step-up in difficulty to challenge students with a better understanding of the material. Alternatively, offer a simplified version for students who are still working to gain a full understanding of the concept. Place students in groups based on their perceived level, or give a brief description of each of the assignments and let them choose which level they feel most comfortable working in. Once completed, discuss and compare the results. By the end of this collaborative exercise, each group will have a greater understanding of the material. If students are able to choose which group they join, the teacher will also get a feel for the comfort level of each student. Present a couple of rubrics (scoring guides) to students, based on their current level, so they have the skills needed in order to better focus and be successful in class. The rubrics should all contain the same basic categories, but the point value or required elements should be adjusted based on the students readiness. For students equipped to take on greater challenges, add more categories or requirements. Conversely, remove some requirements and/or categories for students who need more assistance, or havent quite grasped the material just yet. In exploring various types of instructional strategies, youll find that theres something to suit every type of student level, subject and lecture format. When applied effectively, instructional strategies for teaching can help students gain a deeper understanding of course material and encourage critical thinking, beyond basic retention and surface understanding. Educators, too, can benefit by using different teaching methods throughout the semester to determine the efficacy of lesson plans, and how every student is progressing through each concept. Download our free instructional strategies guide, filled with 25 effective activities and best practices to use in any college course.

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