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CI 171

Final

Models of Teaching

Students and teachers alike have different strengths and weakness in processes of learning and teaching. Because of this, there is no one right way to teach and learn concepts, but there are a variety of teaching models that one can incorporate in their classroom to vary instruction and appeal to the different learning strengths of students. According to our class text, a model of teaching is a description of the environment and behaviors that students and teachers exhibit (224). These models range from planning lessons to designing instructional materials that are to be incorporated in the classroom. While there exists a multitude of models in classrooms all over the world, there are four that caught my eye this semester: direct instruction, simulations, cooperative learning, and synectics. These four models are also grouped into families of compatible models and range from the teacher solely teaching to students partially taking the reigns and responsibility for their own learning.

Jose Lomeli 6/16/11 7:25 AM
Comment: Excellent introductory paragraph serves as an advance organizer.

Behavioral Family – Direct Instruction and Simulations:

According to the foundational idea behind the Behavioral Family of Models, human beings modify their behavior in response to how successful they are at navigating through different tasks. Thus, as one becomes more comfortable with the task at hand, their behavior is adjusted to more easily complete the task. Skinner was one of the main experts describing this phenomenon by saying that feedback

helps humans self-correct their responses and functions and focus on an observable behavior. Mastery Learning and Programmed Instruction, Direct Instruction as well as Learning from Simulations are all examples of behavioral learning.

Direct Instruction:

Direct Instruction has a highly academic focus with the teacher at the center directing and controlling the classroom and managing time. Within this model there is a high expectation for the students to progress as well as to complete the tasks at hand and master the concepts involved. The two major goals include the maximizing of student learning time and student independence to seek their educational goals. With respect to a daily lesson plan, direct instruction usually includes: an introductory activity that elicits students prior knowledge, such as a review of previous work; discussion of the objectives of the current lesson with clear and explicit directions about the materials that will be used to complete the task; and providing a concise overview of the lesson at the end. As with most models, effective teachers spend more time explaining and demonstrating new material using guided practice as well as modeling and opportunities for independent practice.

As we learned about the direct instruction lesson plan and how to effectively write an objective in class, we were exposed to the five phases of this model: orientation, presentation, structured practice, guided practice and independent practice. From the perspective of a student, this model is a twist off of a normal lecture style lesson with a couple more areas for student involvement. For direct instruction to work properly, the teacher is definitely

the “sage on the stage” providing all the necessary content and information about the subject matter. Students, likewise, are in their normal role of sponges, soaking up the information that is being presented by listening intently and taking proper notes. There were several opportunities for student involvement during the structured practice as well as the guided practice, but for the most part the teacher presented the information clearly and concisely for the students to understand. Even in my field study classroom, I am witnessing mostly explicit direct instruction, which is only a slight variation of direct instruction. Teachers ask many questions to check for student understanding and provide examples for students to practice what they learn. This is a very structured model, which is very appropriate for certain topics, but also very boring if it is the only model by which a teacher presents material. Not all students are auditory or even visual learners, but need to touch, move and do things to understand concepts. The beneficial aspect of the direct instruction model is that it can incorporate other models within its lesson plan. While a part of the lesson can be very directly taught, there could be a Jigsaw or Carousel activity based on the information gained through the lecture. The possibilities are endless, when the teacher takes time to be creative with their lesson plans.

Learning through Simulations:

Simulations are one of the highest and most effective methods of modeling that teachers have at their disposal. These are demonstrations and constructed depictions of real-life situations. For the most engaging activity,

the teacher is responsible for creating a less-than-real-life environment in which to achieve the goal of the simulation. As is the case with every teaching model, this shouldn't and cannot be used in every situation.

The culture simulation we did in class this semester exposed me to a truly revolutionary form of teaching. Other than the few opening remarks from the teacher, we were free to explore the lifestyles of the Alpha and Beta cultures and experience first hand the challenges, the emotions and even misunderstandings that occur when cultures collide. Having been born and raised in the United States, I learned to live a certain way which is not native to people from other parts of the world. Just from the simulation experience, I realized the stereotypes that can be created when we are unfamiliar with a certain way of living. Now, I can confidently say that simulations are very powerful. I also remember reading about a simulation done in San Francisco in which students were split up half as guards and the rest as prisoners. This simulation was originally designed to study the psychological aspects of imprisonment, but took a violent turn when the students chosen to "pretend" to be guards took their roles a little too seriously. The experiment had to be dismantled because of the brutal psychological effects of the simulation. This is a real and present danger when conducting any simulation, but a teacher should carefully monitor the effects that the role-play is having on the students. With that said, the experience and value that is gained through simulations is unmatched because of the "realness" of the activity. Every student gets involved and has a role to play within this model. Simulations

would work best as an "after" activity once students are familiar and comfortable with the subject matter and lifestyles they will portray.

Social Family – Cooperative Learning:

As people work together, synergy or a collective energy is formed that drives learning. The Social Family of Models is driven by building learning communities within the classroom to propel students into an active form of learning. Through this positive interaction, students receive support and the essential ingredients to interact productively with one another. Examples of models within this family include: Role Playing, Jurisprudential Inquiry, Adapting to Individual Differences and Cooperative Learning.

Cooperative Learning:

Throughout the last several years, great strides have been made to develop and progress group-learning strategies. The results show that organizing students to work together is highly effective whether it is in simple learning pairs, complex class organization, or whole school learning communities – students are successful at helping students learn. Cooperative learning procedures work across all curriculum areas and grades, they help improve self-esteem, and social skills. The outcome goals of cooperative learning activities can range from the acquisition of knowledge and information to developing complex projects; in either case, the teacher is no longer the "sage on the stage" but the "guide on the side" allowing the students to take some responsibility in learning and teaching the material. Even Vygotsky's theory of co-construction of knowledge centers around the

social transition of students with others. One of the main points of his theoretical framework is that thought originated socially, meaning knowledge is co-constructed between people as they interact or work cooperatively with one another. When students are asked to work together in groups they are operating and solving problems by co-constructing information. This follows the idea that the best way to learn is to teach the material to someone else.

Too much of a good thing, is still too much, and there are instances and misuses of group learning. The teacher must carefully plan and monitor the group interactions to reduce instances of one student dominating others or even being misused by the rest of the group. Many times students value the end result or grade more than the process of learning. Teachers must also be mindful of groups that simply speed through the assignments without taking time to truly grasp the materials at hand. Socializing and off-topic chatter may also be an issue in certain groups or classrooms if it is not monitored well. Also, students may unknowingly support and reinforce misunderstandings and wrong information rather than correcting misconceptions that arise within the group. It is the teacher's responsibility to be an active listener and monitor throughout cooperative learning times to help minimize the negative consequences.

My experiences working cooperatively with a group of students are mixed. Throughout most of my high school years, working in a group was characterized by doing all the work myself a couple nights before the project

was due. The teacher never provided a list of jobs or even a way to evaluate the work that the rest of the group members were contributing – it was an all or nothing grading system, everyone in the group got the same grade whether they had input time and effort to the process or sat around day-dreaming. This was not only frustrating, but very time consuming for a student who really cared about grades. This course, however, completely changed my feelings about cooperative learning. Activities such as Jigsaw where each member of the home team was assigned a topic to become an expert on and then return to the team to share their findings, gave everyone a clear and explicit responsibility, which if taken lightly, everyone (including the teacher) could easily point out. Even the Carousel and Gallery Walk activities depended upon full group participation and cooperation. I truly experienced Vygotsky's theory of co-construction of knowledge as I taught my peers and was taught by them. I also learned the importance of choosing groups randomly rather than just allowing students to group with their specific group of friends. This allows students to socialize with others as well as exchange ideas with people who might not think just like them.

As my evaluation of this model changed, so have my thoughts about incorporating it in my own classroom in the future. From my own experiences this semester, I realize the gem that it is. Even though it is less "direct instruction" from me as the teacher, it in no way is less time consuming or planning. I must be even more prepared with clear and explicit directions and job descriptions for each cooperative learning experience. For

cooperative learning to be a positive and successful experience for my students I must also create an environment that is conducive to group learning, in which students know what work they are responsible for, to work as a group to solve problems as well as to ask each other for help before coming to the teacher for guidance. The Jigsaw, Carousel and Gallery Walk activities are each broad enough to fit into any subject and grade level lesson and will allow my students to work together for one common goal: to learn.

Information Processing Family – Synectics:

According to the class text, in the information processing family of models, there is a large emphasis on enhancing the human drive to make sense of the world by acquiring and organizing data, seeing the problems and devising solutions for them, as well as developing concepts and language to express them (225). Because of this, many of the models are useful in studying the self and society. Models such as Inductive Thinking, Concept Attainment, Scientific Inquiry, Mnemonics, Advance Organizers as well as Synectics are all models within the Information Processing Family.

Synectics:

Synectics incorporates and develops creativity within student work. When faced with a task, we typically take a logical problem solving approach. In the case of writing, we make an outline of the facts and points we want to develop as well as analyzing the elements of the problem we want to work through by using our background knowledge of the subject. There are times,

however, when logic just doesn't cut it, when we need a new way to see things, express ourselves as well as approach a problem. This is when synectics comes into play; it is a way to devise a fresh way of thinking about something. According to the text, the teaching model of synectics is grounded in four ideas that challenge conventional views about creativity: creativity is important in everyday activities; the creative processes is not mysterious – it is possible to train-up creativity; creativity is characterized by the same underlying process; and that individual and group creative thinking are similar (389). Within the model of synectics there are two main strategies that teachers can incorporate, the first being creating something new, and the second making the strange familiar. Both of these strategies use the three types of analogy, but in different ways. The first familiarizes students with things in an unfamiliar way by creating a conceptual distance, while the second seeks to increase the understanding of a new or different material.

The synectics activity we completed about fog was one of my favorites all semester. My first paragraph about was very analytical and even pessimistic, but as we unpacked and described fog using various analogies and metaphors, my second draft took on a whole different direction and purpose. Being trained as a journalist and a creative writer, I have seen several different applications of this model without even realizing what it was. Synectics is a very structured brainstorming activity that is not only great for creatively expressing something that would be otherwise very logical, but also develops great brick words, which are very helpful for

English Language Learners. This model can prove to be a great asset for teaching students about the steps of the writing process and how one can incorporate creative language into different steps of writing. Students can even analyze text and books to pick out different instances in which authors used synectics strategies to enhance their writing. Without a doubt, I will use this model in my classroom to develop creativity in my students' writing. I believe too many students go through school learning to write cookie-cutter essays without any creativity sprinkled through their text. I am not going to let my students say that their experience in my classroom was the same.

Conclusion

This semester, although short and seemingly in fast-forward mode, was very inspirational. I learned more than I ever imagined I could about the different parts of the brain, how children learn and even different models that I can incorporate in my own classroom. I am truly grateful for the time and effort that was put into modeling the strategies and guiding us toward our goal. My future students will definitely be impacted for the better because of my experiences in this class.

Jose Lomeli 10/17/11 8:39 AM

Comment: "Jane", A truly outstanding, well-written essay. This was organized well with in-depth background and content information on your selected topics. Furthermore, you demonstrated some of the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy such as application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Rubric for Final Examination (30 points)

Criteria	10 Indicator Met	5 Indicator Partially Met	1 Indicator Not Met	Score
Content	This report covers all major aspects of the topic and is focused. In addition to the foundational levels of Bloom's, it shows evidence of the higher levels of the Taxonomy (application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation). The report references at least 4 areas of the instructional theories and strategies experienced in class.	This report covers several aspects of the topic but omits some important information. It shows evidence of the foundational levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (Knowledge & Comprehension). The report references at least 3 areas of the instructional theories and strategies experienced in class.	This paper is limited to one or two aspects of the topic. It shows evidence of the knowledge level of Bloom's Taxonomy. The report references at least 2 areas of the instructional theories and strategies experienced in class.	**10**
Organization	This report is logically organized and easy to follow. The introduction presents the topics, the content follows in reasonable order, and the conclusion pulls information together	This report shows some evidence of organization, but it lacks a clearly constructed beginning, middle, and end. Connections among subtopics are sometimes unclear.	This report is difficult to follow because it lacks a logical organizational plan. It shifts from one idea to another without making logical connections.	**10**
Use of Conventions and Professionalism	This paper shows consistent use of standard English and correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing. It is neat and legible.	This paper indicates a general observance of conventions, but several errors exist in spelling, mechanics, and form.	This paper shows little awareness of writing conventions. Neatness and legibility are minimal.	**10**
Total				**30**