“Several Teaching Strategies In Detail”

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The art of teaching does not solely include teaching the content knowledge of the subject being taught. It also requires pedagogy, or the act of teaching, which is another, yet different, set of knowledge and skills. In order to be successful at pedagogy, a teacher needs to have a variety of teaching strategies that s/he can use in the classroom when working with students. The sole purpose of these teaching strategies is to benefit and improve student learning. From arranging the room to questioning that involve critical thinking all helps students to learn from different modes of teaching and resources. In this paper, the following teaching strategies have been explained: Introduction/Presentation, Demonstration, Questioning, Wait Time, Room Arrangement, and Journaling. Each strategy explained has a definition, a skit with the strategy being put to use, and the benefits of that particular strategy.

The teaching strategy, “**Introduction/Presentation**”, refers to students’ prior knowledge by the use of questions and/or presentations of pictures/words or homework that was assigned the night before to help students start thinking about the topic that is going to be taught.

*The period starts. Students have already grabbed a sheet of paper, a ruler, and a pencil from the materials table and sat down at the tables in the middle of the class. The teacher stands near the chalkboard.*

***Teacher****: (looks at students)* How many of you recently walked down a street with buildings on both sides? *(some students raise their hands)* Okay. Today we’re going to learn how to draw that scene. If we draw a row of buildings on one side of the street, it is called one-point perspective. However, if we draw two rows of buildings coming out at you, like in this picture, it is called two-point perspective. We’re going to focus on one row right now. Now let’s look at this picture of a street that I passed by. (The picture is of a street that goes far back into the distance with buildings on either side of the street.) Can anyone describe what is happening to the buildings in this picture?

***Student 4***: They’re bigger in the front and smaller in the back?

***Teacher***: Yes, and what is happening to the road?

***Student 2***: There is a triangle shape for the road.

***Teacher***: Okay. And why do you think has that shape? (*the class is silent*) What’s happening to the road is the same as what’s happening to the buildings. The buildings and road are getting smaller because they’re further back in the distance. (*points to the middle of the picture*) As you can see here, it seems like all the buildings and road come together here at this point. This point is invisible because if you go to this spot, you won’t see a point there. However, from the distance that we’re at right now, that spot looks like it’s meeting together. This spot is called the vanishing point. Now, let’s look at this building that is closest to us. What are the directions of the lines that indicate the bottom of the building?

***The Class***: They’re horizontal?

***Teacher***: How do we know that? Who wants to come up with their ruler? (picks on Student 6) Okay, now take your ruler and trace the bottom of this first building on the side that meets the road. What is the direction of your ruler?

***Student 6***: It’s on a diagonal?

***Teacher***: Correct. And how about this bottom of the side that is facing us?

***Student 6***: It’s horizontal.

***Teacher****:* Correct. So, how come this building has both diagonal and horizontal lines at the bottom?

(*The class continues discussing the topic*)

Introduction/Presentation helps students connect prior knowledge to the topic they are currently learning. This teaching strategy portrays the significance of learning new information. There is meaning to the topic that is relevant to students’ lives. Without realizing the importance, students will become disengaged. Thus, Introduction/Presentation also helps students become motivated to learn the new topic. They will be more eager to grasp the meaning of the concept(s) being taught and engage in critical thinking. They will also have more fun in completing the tasks expected of them. Students become more eager to learn because this teaching strategy breaks down the topic and can summarize what students will learn. Students will know what to expect from the topic being taught.

This strategy also helps the teacher, who is able to assess what students know and do not know. Teachers can then make a decision as to what info they need to cover or do not need to cover because students already know a particular information or technique/skill. By knowing the level that students are currently on helps teachers understand where they should start in the lesson. This knowledge also forms a connection between the teacher and students, who will feel that they have a caring teacher.

**Demonstration** is the teaching strategy where the teacher first shows the steps to the instructions of the project that the students will be completing in the classroom. While the teacher shows the steps and ultimately make an example of the task that students are expected to complete, the teacher explains tips and procedures that will help students to not only complete the task in an orderly fashion, but to also think critically about each step.

*The teacher has finished introducing the topic of learning how to draw one-point perspective.*

***Teacher:*** *(points to the board)* I am going to go through each step. I want you all to have your paper in front of you and your rulers on top of your paper. Okay, let’s start. One of the most important lines that you need when drawing one-point perspective is the horizon line. *(holds ruler horizontally on the chalkboard)* So, place your ruler in the middle of the paper, relatively a little lower than the half point of the paper, like so. Then, use your pencil and ruler to draw a straight horizontal line. When everyone has finished, please look up at the board. *(walks around to look at students’ progress)* So, everyone, what is this line called?

***The Class:*** *(chorus)* The horizon line.

***Teacher:*** *(goes back to the board)* Correct, so let’s put a label here as to what line this is *(writes “horizontal line” near the line)* Now, the next symbol we need to draw is called the vanishing point, which is indicated by a dot. This dot can be placed anywhere on the horizon line. Let’s put our dot in the middle of the page. *(pauses and looks up at the class)* Remember when we looked at the picture of the city street? What happened to the buildings that were further away from the viewer?

***Student 1:*** *(raises her hand)* The buildings get smaller to the point where you couldn’t see it clearly anymore.

***Teacher:*** *(nods)*

Demonstration is crucial in a learning environment especially in the art classroom. Not only are there chemicals and dangerous materials involved and used in the classroom, improper usages of these materials can result in negative consequences that can ultimately physically hurting someone. Thus, demonstrations are needed to show the proper ways of using and cleaning up the art materials safely.

Demonstration is also a great way to help students see visually how a concept is created. For example, the one-point perspective concept in the skit is a basic concept that has set rules that needs to be followed in order to successfully draw in that type of perspective. By visually showing students the steps one by one, students will learn how to create an artwork that may seem impossible to complete at the beginning. Demonstration skills not only breaks down the task into smaller steps, provide visual processes, they also include tips and suggestions that teachers give students to think about the task at hand and why certain steps are necessary to creating a successful final piece.

On the flip side, while demonstrations can show the proper way of using a material or explaining a basic concept, they can also show one method out of many when creating artworks that involve a wider concept, such as using abstract principles to create an artwork.

**Questioning** has two parts: the first involves the teacher asking questions that requires critical thinking and can inspire students to create new ideas, and the second pertains to students questioning the subject they’re learning as well as their own artistic progression.

*The teacher is introducing the topic of advertisements to students with essential questions.*

***Teacher:*** *(in front of class)* Please by yourselves right now answer the following questions by jotting down at least three ideas and explanations for each question. “What is an advertisement?” “When is an advertisement successful?” “Are advertisements considered as art?” I will give you ten minutes to complete.

*The teacher waits about ten minutes before getting the students together. In the meantime, s/he walks around viewing briefly at students’ answers.*

***Teacher:*** *(back at the front of the class)* Alright, finish writing your last thought. *(Waits about another few seconds)* Let us look at the first question. “What is an advertisement?” Anyone have any ideas?

***Student 1:*** *(raises his hand)* An advertisement sells a product.

***Teacher:*** *(nods and smiles at Student 1)* Okay, that is one aspect. Any others? *(looks around the room)*

***Student 2:*** *(raises his hand)* An advertisement can also sell an idea.

***Teacher:*** *(nods and smiles at Student 2)* Okay. Now, how about what an advertisement looks like?

***Student 3:*** *(raises her hand)* An advertisement could be a TV commercial, a poster, or a book jacket.

***Student 1:*** *(raises his hand)* What about T-shirts with logos on them? Would that be considered as an advertisement?

***Student 3:*** *(shouts out)* Yeah! You would then be a walking advertisement. Not only are logos on T-shirts, but also on shoes, especially the Nike sneakers.

***Teacher:***Good! Now let’s look at question #2. “When is an advertisement successful?”

*The teacher and students continue to discuss the rest of the essential questions.*

Questioning is important because it allows students’ thinking to branch out. The crucial aspect to questioning is the type of inquiry asked. Only the open-ended and thought-provoking kinds will allow students to reevaluate their own thinking and processes. The second benefit to questioning not only allows students to think more critically about the task at hand, but the repetition of question usage promotes the habit of always questioning topics or ideas that follow. As students work on other subject areas, they will bring this particular skill of questioning into those areas as well. Only by questioning does one learn more and have a better grasp of the idea, topic, and/or process. The third benefit to questioning allows teachers to not only articulate more clearly some of the confusing topics presented in class, teachers are able to better monitor student learning progression. Through the types of questions asked teachers can point out how much information a student is processing and applying in his/her project. The last benefit to questioning is the process of bringing up new ideas that even the teacher may not have thought about before. Bringing up new questions not only benefits the student and his/her classmates, but the teacher as well through improvement of pedagogy and teaching the information in general.

**Wait time** is the brief time that teachers give students to think about and answer the question that was just posed by the teacher.

*The teacher is introducing the topic of advertisements to students with essential questions. They have gone over the first question. Now, the class is focusing on answering question #2.*

***Teacher:***Good! Now let’s look at question #2. “When is an advertisement successful?”

***Student 4:*** *(raises her hand)* When the customer buys something?

***Teacher:***Do you mean buying something as in an idea, an actual object, or both?

***Student 1:*** (*raises his hand)* It depends what the advertisement is trying to convey. It could be either an idea, an actual object or both simultaneously.

***Teacher:*** (*pauses and thinks for a second)* Okay…so an advertisement is successful when the customer is convinced that the idea and/or object that the advertisement is trying to promote is correct. Now, I want you all to take a few seconds to think about this question: What qualities make a successful advertisement? You can think about what qualities make an advertisement unsuccessful as well.

*The teacher waits about 3 to 4 seconds while she looks around the room. Right after the question is posed, some students’ hands reach into the air. Several other students look to the sides of the room, thinking. After a couple of seconds, they too raise their hands.*

***Student 5:*** (*raises his hand*) We mentioned before the different types of advertisements. There are commercials, posters, clothing, etc.

Wait-time is crucial in the classroom because it takes time for the brain to process the question. The brain first needs to grasp what the question is asking for then dig into prior knowledge and long-term memory for information already learned to help with forming the answer. Wait-time is also important because it allows all students to have the same time to think of an answer before raising their hands. When a teacher asks a question and immediately expects an answer, students who are able to think quickly will raise their hands and often are the same students. The other students who need a few seconds to think about the question will become disengaged in class because they will keep seeing that the same students are being picked to answer the question simply because they were able to think of the answer faster. These disengaged students will eventually become unmotivated students who do not care about the tasks at hand. Thus, by giving all the students the opportunity to think about the question allows all the students to have an equal chance to answer the question.

Another benefit to wait-time is that it allows the teacher to think about how s/he phrased the question based on students’ facial expressions. If many of the students look confused, the teacher can rephrase the question or give additional information that links to students’ prior knowledge to help students come to a solution. Because students are given time to answer, by the time the teacher expects an answer, more students will be able to raise their hands. By having more students raise their hands, the teacher can call on a variety of students each time a question is presented. This allows the teacher to determine whether or not the question(s) asked are fully understood by the class a whole, and not only by a few students.

**Journal keeping** is a teaching strategy that asks students to keep a journal daily or weekly. The length of time that the journal is kept depends on the teacher. In their journals, students can record minutes of critiques, meetings, and daily classroom activities, students’ own work progress, jot down ideas/thoughts, questions, findings and answers, and information they’ve learned.

***Student 1***: (*writes in journal for Day 1)* Today in class we learned about facial expressions. There are so many expressions that people make everyday: happy, angry, sad, shocked, stressed, determined, etc. Facial expressions are important because we can tell how other people without them needing to say a word. So, if my friend feels sad because he/she always has a frown, but doesn’t say anything, I know that I need to do something to help him/her out by either listening or talking with them. Hopefully, he/she will be happier. Today we also learned about how facial expressions are important in comics because it helps readers more easily relate to how the characters are feeling. In addition to facial expressions, the text and lines in the panels also help create the mood. I guess lines are mostly used because it appears as if most comics aren’t in color. So, without color, the only way to express moods is through the use of lines. The reason for the lack of colors is perhaps because it is too costly to print in color. The artist doesn’t need to spend extra time coloring in the panels either.

Journals help students keep the information they have learned from the classroom and outside of school in one area. When students need to refer back to the information they have jotted down, it is easily found because it will be in the journal. Journals allow students to record their ideas/thoughts and questions as well as their findings and answers. By jotting down an idea or thought that is not needed right away, the idea is kept safe in the journal. Students can go back to that idea in the future. This concept applies to questions as well. Students may not have an answer at the moment, but after some time of further investigation and reflection, they may be able to go back and answer their initial questions. Jotting ideas is crucial to keep on task. When students have spent a lot of time thinking about a topic, they may have gone off onto a tangent. Referring back to the initial idea may bring them back to the original topic or question that they started off with.

Journal keeping also allows students to elaborate on a concept they either understand and/or do not. By writing out thoughts and questions makes the brain seek for more connections. Part of the process of art making is to think about the concept and purpose of one’s artwork and how the artwork is meaningful or not. By writing down words and sentences allow students to practice their writing skills. Finding information by including quotes, pictures, etc. enhances students’ research skills, which is crucial in their critical thinking and problem-solving developments.

This strategy is not limited to solely using words; students can use this learning method by visually sketching their ideas and concepts. Thumbnails of different design ideas allows students to sketch out their ideas and ultimately find the design that would work best to their concept and idea. Journaling also helps students practice their drawing skills as well as use the Principles and Elements of Design by the marks they make in their journals.

Journal keeping allows both the student and teacher to track the students’ learning progression. To the students, seeing what they have learned over time is crucial to understanding their own learning development, how they learned, the methods that helped learning work best, what topics they are more interested in, answers to questions they have solved, the steps to finding those answers, etc. Their journals also keep a record of their existence in time, which in itself is a metacognitive concept that they may want to explore in the future. To the teachers, the journals allow them to track students’ thinking and effort towards trying to grasp a concept. Through journaling, teachers can also know whether or not the teaching method they used in class was effective or not, what information needs to be taught again or reviewed, and what information students are interested in that the teacher can go into further detail.

**Room arrangement** is the movement of furniture for classroom learning purposes.

*As soon as the bell rings to indicate the start of the period, the teacher tells the students to help move their desks to the side of the room.*

**Teacher:** Good work, everyone. I’ve asked you all to help move the desks aside so that we have room for our activity. Today you’re going to split into groups of four and I will come around with a basket. One of your group members will reach into the basket and pull out a piece of paper. The paper will have a name that corresponds to a character in a cartoon show or comic book. Has anyone played the game, charades, before? (*looks around the room.*)

*Couple of students raises their hands.*

**Teacher:** Lindsey, can you explain to those who haven’t played the game before what the rules and objectives are?

**Lindsey:** It’s a game where you have to act out something, but you can’t say anything. Your group member has to guess what you’re trying to act out.

**Teacher:** Right, so in our game, rather than trying to get your teammates to guess the answer, you have to get the rest of the class to guess your group’s cartoon character. You and your teammates will work together to come up with how you want to act out your character. Make sure you remember that you cannot talk or spell out your character. It is an acting game.

Room arrangement is beneficial to learning that requires kinetic exercises and activities. Students have room to move around and use their energy in stimulation activities. Students are also able to get up and physically move around rather than have to sit down for the whole class period. A second reason that room arrangement is useful is that stations can be made for students to experience different modes of learning, especially on one topic or concept, or students can work on skill building by experiencing different mediums.

A third reason is that room arrangement can help with discipline purposes. Students that need to be separated can work at different locations in the classroom. Simply moving a desk and chair can solve classroom disruptions and have more time on effective student learning. A fourth reason why the teaching strategy, room arrangement, is crucial is that more space can be gained by moving the furniture out of the way when students are working on a large project, such as a mural or a poster. Students will not be crammed together just to have access to the artwork. Less traffic will occur because more room will be available for students to access art materials.

These strategies are only a few of the many strategies that teachers need to have in their teaching box in order to have successful pedagogy skills. Students benefit from these strategies one way or another and require the abundant skills that teachers have in being able to clearly present the information being learned. Furthermore, many 21st century skills, such as problem solving, critical thinking, socialization, group work, etc., are incorporated in these teaching strategies. These are skills that students need to practice and acquire for their own futures. By demonstrating how to use these skills and putting them to use daily shows students the purpose and proper ways of executing these skills.