CORE FUNCTION	EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	INDICATOR
Classroom Instruction	Maintain sound classroom management	All teachers use a variety of instructional modes (whole-class, teacher-directed groups, student-directed groups, independent work, computer-based, homework). (160)

Explanation: Students learn through various modes of instruction, and their experience with these modes builds their abilities for self-directed learning and metacognition. Common modes of instruction are: teacher-directed whole class; teacher-directed small group; student-directed small group; individual (independent) work; computer or technology-based learning; and homework. Teachers are able to differentiate their instruction by varying student assignments within several of these modes. Teacher Instructional Teams develop instructional plans that include differentiated activities within the modes.

Questions: Does your school provide training for teachers to use a variety of instructional modes? Does your school provide common instructional planning templates to include a variety of modes? Do your teacher Instructional Teams develop differentiated learning activities within each appropriate mode? Do your teachers' lesson plans include a variety of modes? Do you look for a variety of modes in classroom observations?

Every good teacher comes to class prepared (through working with her or his fellow teachers during instructional team meeting time) with a full quiver of tools for learning to take place in the classroom. This quiver includes lesson plans which involve a variety of modes for delivering the lesson, as well as differentiated exercises for each of his/her students based on the results of pre- and post-tests. The teacher is familiar with his/her students, and knows what each student needs.

Because students cannot know what has not been taught, the teacher typically begins with teacher-directed whole class instruction. Direct instruction has gotten a bad rap in the last few years, however, Hattie (2009, 2012) cites direct instruction as having one of the highest effect sizes (d = 0.59) of an of the methods studied. However, it must be done correctly and well. The process starts with the instructional team deciding on the purpose and intent of the lesson, clearly stating this at the beginning of the lesson, and being intentional on what is the be the outcomes of the lesson – with ways to measure whether that outcome was achieved (Hattie, 2012). The lesson itself follows a sequence , including the use of review, the presentation of new content and skills, guided student practice, the use of feedback and correctives, and independent student practice (Walberg, 2007, p.91).

In the typical sequence of instruction, teacher-directed instruction usually comes first. This can be followed by a second mode of instruction which will be differentiated according to the needs of individual students. This can include teacher-directed small group, student-directed small group, or individual work. With the computer playing a more prominent role in classrooms, computer-based work may also be utilized after direct instruction. The teacher has all these tools at his disposal to meet the learning needs of his students. Keep in mind, all of this does not happen at a sudden whim—it has all been pre-planned and orchestrated within the instructional team. Student performance has been analyzed and discussed in order to determine which method of instructional delivery is best for each student to reinforce what was taught in teacher-directed whole-class instruction. Redding (2007) gives some direction on the best way to use small groupings of students:

Teacher-directed, small-group instruction is an effective follow-up to the whole-class presentation, enabling the teacher to focus instructional attention on the particular requirements of homogeneous groups of students. The groupings should be fluid, rearranged frequently in response to particular learning needs. Students should not be clustered in other ways – such as seating arrangements – that appear to solidify group membership and "label" members. Because groups are formed to address particular learning needs, they will vary from time to time in number of members and in the time devoted to them (Good & Brophy, 2000). Small groups may also be employed for student-directed learning, with instructions provided by the teacher, and are especially effective for cooperative learning and peer-to-peer learning. (p. 106-107)

When using computer-based instruction, the instructional team ahead of time has determined that the programs and content being used are aligned with the standards and objectives that were used in direct instruction. While using the computer is becoming more prominent and is a powerful tool, it should be used to reinforce what is being taught in the classroom. It also requires the teacher to "know the content of the computer program and to use it in concert with other modes of instruction. It also requires that the teacher check for mastery of objectives independent of the program's validation of mastery. When a computer program is successful, students are engaged, on task, and comfortable with the program and its navigation" (Redding, 2007, p. 107).

Homework is yet another mode of instruction, that when used well, can reinforce the learning that occurred during the day. Homework should never be used to introduce new material, but rather to reinforce learning and skills that were presented during whole-class and small-group lessons. Homework should not be assigned as "busy work," but rather as an extension of the learning time for students. Homework can be considered as "practice time" for mastering a new skill. Walberg and Paik (2000), state that "a synthesis of more than a dozen studies of the effects of homework in various subjects showed that the assignment and completion of homework yield positive effects on academic achievement. The effects are almost tripled when teachers take time to grade the homework, make corrections and specific comments on improvements that can be made, and discuss problems and solutions with individual students or the whole class" (p. 9).

Each of these modes is used in concert with one another to provide the student with maximum opportunities to learn.

REFERENCE AND RESOURCES

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