**Delivery Of Instruction**

Beginning teachers generally understand instructional methods, strategies, subject matter content, and planning practices. However, the school administrators we surveyed cited the following common difficulties and offered suggestions for improvement.

- Resist teaching strategies that are based only on the way you were taught when you were in school and remember what you were taught in your college teacher preparation program. Vary your strategies based on content, learning styles of students, and grade level.

- Recognize that you are inexperienced as a teacher. You may also lack varied life experiences. This inexperience frequently makes it more difficult for the beginning teacher to relate course content to real-life situations. You should seek out a variety of resources to help make course content “real” for your students.

- Try to learn the characteristics of student differences such as culture, personality, gender handicapping conditions and learning styles. Use this information when planning course content, materials, activities and instructional methods in general.

- Familiarize yourself with the concept of “academic Freedom.” Generally, the local school board has the authority to determine the content of every course within a school district. Most school boards, however, depend on administrators and teachers to select and implement the material that should be taught within a given course. Because teachers work in a sensitive area of society, individually they typically enjoy little or not legal latitude concerning what will be taught to the students. A teacher in grades K-12 does, however, have some degree of academic freedom concerning his or her method of instruction so long as the teacher has not been otherwise directed and so long as their chosen method is one that is generally recognized by their profession.

- Understand that the U.S. constitutional requirement for separation of church and state requires that no part of the government, such as a public school, may promote or inhibit religion. Thus, no public school personnel should indicate actively or passively a time for prayer or “private meditation.” However, students who wish to bow their heads, fold their hands, or otherwise pray silently, and who are not being disruptive should be permitted to do so.
Presenting The Lesson

The administrators in this study noted that because beginning teachers typically focus upon their own performance in getting the lesson taught, they often forget to stay in tune with the students’ reactions to the lesson. We offer the following tips on how to engage students in your learning activities.

- Ensure that the classroom environment is inviting to all students and that no single group or type of child is unrecognized.
- The teacher should invite each student to participate in class discussion to enable students to develop their interest in the lesson.
- Monitor which parts of the lesson spark the most student interest and focus additional questions and activities on those areas. Keep the students on track.
- While student interest is high, pause before the next lesson to take the time for students to expand and transfer their knowledge by engaging in activities related to lifetime experiences.
- Recognize that teacher-guided discovery methods tend to focus the students on your objective while the students take charge of their own process.
- Resist discovery methods and individualized instruction that are so permissive that the students lose direction, motivations, and the lesson’s focus.
- Do not lecture throughout the lesson. Students need to be active while learning.
- Let the students know that you expect them to master their skills.
- Have students review a previously introduced skill while taking care of “housekeeping procedures,” such as distributing and collecting papers or taking attendance. Try to cluster housekeeping activities together to maximize instructional time. By handling more than one housekeeping task at once, you reduce your student’s time away from the instructional task.

Different methods of teaching work better in some situations than in others. The following table shows different methods of instructional delivery and when each is appropriate or inappropriate. Use this table, advice from your experienced colleagues, and your own experience to determine which method might work best for you in any given situation.
# Instructional Methods and Their Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>When to use</th>
<th>When not to use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Instruction</td>
<td>Provides basic facts that are necessary as a foundation for further learning.</td>
<td>Grammar rules, scientific law and principles, music fundamentals (scales, etc.), fact-based instruction.</td>
<td>More effective with older students who have mature attention spans, when retention of facts is primary objective.</td>
<td>Less effective when students are passive learners (focus of lesson is on the teacher), younger students, shorter attention spans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inquiry</td>
<td>Helps students develop higher level thinking skills.</td>
<td>Experimentation and research projects, field trips.</td>
<td>Effective with all students, all ages, as active learners.</td>
<td>When instruction is time limited.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individualized Instruction</td>
<td>Allows self-paced presentation of content by students.</td>
<td>Private music instruction, reading, math, etc.</td>
<td>When there is a significant range of abilities within the classroom.</td>
<td>When social interaction is desired or necessary, or when time constraints preclude.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Centers</td>
<td>Encourages students to engage in self-paced discovery.</td>
<td>Geography, science, weather</td>
<td>Effective with all students, all ages, as active and cooperative learning. Most effective when teacher feedback is provided regularly.</td>
<td>When students lack necessary background and fundamentals or if content is too elementary for students to retain their interest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer assisted instruction</td>
<td>Provides students with a device for drill and practice, simulation, and solving computational problems.</td>
<td>Math, foreign language, stock market simulations, vocabulary, spelling, etc.</td>
<td>Effective when drill and practice are necessary for memorization. To develop higher-level thinking skills through simulation or when is undesirable to dissect an animal.</td>
<td>When students have insufficient understanding of computer fundamentals or subject content.</td>
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