

A Desire to Succeed

Effective teachers must have more than adequate skills in many areas. Three important areas are instruction, class management and value-added assessment. Having teaching skills in these three areas ensure that students are learning and retaining information correctly and thoroughly.

A very important idea in instruction is that of delivery. Delivery is how the teacher transmits the lesson to his or her students (Armstrong, Henson, & Savage, 2005, pp. 197-199). The delivery is what will grab the student's attention and keep their focus on the topic at hand. The educator must show enthusiasm for the topic and find an effective way to make the students enthusiastic about the topic, such as doing an activity or exercise which relates. The delivery must be very informative and highlight the important aspects of the topic, which the students need to remember. The teacher should give excellent examples and demonstrations, and write down important facts on the board as he or she explains the new information. Following the new information, the teacher should summarize what was just taught and ask the students questions to be sure that they comprehend the new material. The next step in delivery is to give the students guided practice with the new material. The teacher should be sure that all students understand the concept well enough to perform the new task on their own. This also allows the teacher to know whether to slow down or speed up the lesson. Following the guided practice, students should be left to work on their own. The importance of delivery in instruction is that this is the time when the new information is given and if not effective the students will not retain any information. It also gives the students a chance to try out the new material and ensures that the class is keeping up.

Another aspect of effective teaching is that of class management. An important idea in class management is that of flow, or management of space and time (Armstrong, Henson, & Savage, 2005, pp. 228-229). Space management is important to keep students from disturbing one another or misbehaving. Ideas dealing with this would be to have the instructor's desk at the front of the room to keep an eye on all students. The desks should be spaced apart properly and leave enough room to walk through without disrupting those around the area. Items that can cause distractions, such as the pencil sharpener, should be placed in the rear of the classroom so as not to disturb the entire class. Time management is also an important part of flow. Lessons should be spaced out to allow extra time if needed and not cheat time on other subject areas. A schedule would also be helpful for students to follow so they understand that there are times to do certain things such as, free time, in-class work and restroom breaks. Flow is important because it helps the teacher to have control over the classroom and ensures that disruptions will be limited.

Value-added assessment is a third area in which the teacher needs to be effective. This type of assessment refers to the method of analyzing student assessment results in such a way as to determine the "value" that a school contributes to a student's learning progress during a particular time period (Ohio Department of Education, 2006-2007). Ohio legislators added value-added progress measures as a fourth component of Ohio's accountability system. Understanding this assessment informs teachers where differential instruction is needed and can aid in helping both the low achiever and high achiever gain more.

Out of the three aspects of being an effective teacher, my strength falls under that of value-added assessment. During my tutoring field experience I asked questions to see

which students could answer correctly. I worked with students one at a time to evaluate where exactly they needed help and could tell when a student wasn't completely understanding by their lack of participation or attitude toward me and other students at times. I gave the students a chance to review material with only me and also with other students who had a good handle on the subject. I gave the students examples, tips and clues to help them succeed in their work.

One of my weaknesses I found during my field experience was with class management and flow. While tutoring I would allow the students to sit directly next to each other and pick their seats. They were disruptive and interrupted me multiple times. This angered the other students who were trying to focus and re-learn information. Another problem I faced was that with time. I only had a short amount of time to work with three to five students. I couldn't give them all the attention and focus they needed. I needed a better time plan to work with and didn't plan for those problems ahead. Another issue was the time of day that I was tutoring. The students had just returned from lunch and recess and were still riled up. They did not care to pay attention to me and still just wanted to run around and play. It was hard to keep them focused on the topic and really help them.

My second weakness was with instruction and delivery. I couldn't explain the material well at times and sometimes confused the students. I had difficulty thinking of examples on the spot and tried my best with hints and tips. The students couldn't follow what I was saying at times and it wasted the limited amount of time I had with them to think up explanations and examples.

As I continue through the teaching program I plan to further improve my strengths and weaknesses. My weakness in management can be fixed by spacing out students so they are not as disruptive and work out a time plan ahead of time to ensure that all students get equal attention. As I work with students more I will be sure to plan out my tasks ahead and leave extra time in case it is needed. My weakness in instruction can be fixed by finding out ahead of time what topics the students will need help with and plan out examples and demonstrations. I can take time to figure out a way to attain and maintain their attention and what approach I can take to make them comprehend the material best. I can also think of questions that may be asked to me ahead of time so that I am already prepared with an answer. By turning my weaknesses into strengths and further strengthening areas I have skills in I can become a very effective teacher. I am sure that as I go through the YSU teacher education program and follow my improvement plan I will attain knowledge that will help me overcome my weaknesses and have many more experiences which will allow me to try out my skills.

Bibliography

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